



THIRUKKURAL EXPRESS

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Ilakkuvanar's Thirukkural Mission:
A Force for four Decades (1933-1973)

Ilakkuvanar's Thirukkural Mission: A Force for four decades (1933-1973)

Prof.S.Ilakkuvanar, an unsung hero in the battle against suppression of linguistic human rights, ever remains as an embodiment of Tamil heroism in the history of Tamilnadu.His role as an indomitable warrior in the fight against imposition of Hindi, domination of Sanskrit and aggressive encroachment of English in the fields of Education and administration deserve immediate attention of scholars for proper documentation so as to record his due place in the annals of history.

While carrying on his crusade for the cause of Tamil on one hand he also strived his every nerve to propagate the maxims of Thiruvalluvar, the vivid portrayal of Tamil culture and civilization by sangam classics and the knowledge of Tholkappiyam as a classical treatise on Tamil language and literature. His multifaceted personality as an orator, journalist, translator, poet and educationist helped him achieve his target.

At a very young age of 23, while he was a college student, Ilakkuvanar started his Thirukkural mission after a thorough reading of Thirukkural and its commentaries which compelled him to propagate this secular scripture for the benefit of the people. While he was a Vidwan intermediate student at Raja's college, Thiruvaiyaru (1933) he began his mission. At weekends he went to the surrounding villages to propagate the lofty ideals of Thiruvalluvar. He willfully took this noble task of propagating Thirukkural so as to motivate the people to alleviate their worries and achieve progress in their lives. He took a vow to carry on this propagation of Thirukkural throughout his life just like a Christian missionary, not expecting any benefit from this, but at the same time never to get afraid of any difficulties faced due to this preaching of Thirukkural. Till his demise at 1973 September 3, he had conducted thousands of Thirukkural classes on week-ends, hundreds of seminars and conferences at many places in Tamilnadu, to introduce, instruct and enlighten people on various aspects of Thirukkural.

He started his teaching career at the then Thanjavur District board high schools. From the very beginning of his career, he made it a custom to celebrate Thiruvalluvar day during Navrathri (dasara) holidays. During those days, Ilakkuvanar might be the only teacher to conduct Thiruvalluvar day as a public function with the co-ordination of students, teachers and parents. It never ended till his retirement. The venues changed but the spirit and enthusiasm to introduce Thirukkural and celebrate the magnanimity and genius of Thiruvalluvar never decreased. During those days only few people understood Ilakkuvanar's intention to propagate the ideals of Thiruvalluvar. As Ilakkuvanar was an ardent admirer and sincere follower of Periyar E.V.R., many persons with a paranoid approach misunderstood the meetings as a sort of propaganda for E.V.R.'s self-respect movement. When he authored and published a book titled, "Who is an able minister?", with an intention to explain the division of amachuiyal (The chapter about ministers) in Thirukkural, paranoid onlookers thought Ilakkuvanar has criticized the congress ministers. Even without having a glance of the book, they sent telegrams to the Premier (Chief Minister) that Prof.S.Ilakkuvanar has done a great mistake by indulging in politics and blaming ministers. They went to the extent of demanding the dismissal of Ilakkuvanar from his Professor post.

The then Premier Kumaraswami Raja sent Rupees Two by Telegraphic Money order and requested to send the book immediately. A couple of days after the Premier received the book, he sent a letter to Prof.S.Ilakkuvanar, appreciating him for his analysis of Thirukkural in a new angle. Those who had sent telegrams and expected Ilakkuvanar's dismissal got disappointed. This event is mentioned to disclose the circumstance and sequence of the past under which Ilakkuvanar propagated Thirukkural.

Periyar hailed the Thirukkural as a valuable scripture which contained many scientific and philosophical truths. He also praised the secular nature of the work. Periyar praised Thiruvalluvar for his description of God as a formless entity with only positive attributes. He also suggested that one who reads the Thirukkural will become a Self-respecter, absorbing knowledge in politics, society, and economics. According to him, though certain items in this ancient book of ethics may not relate to today, it permitted such changes for modern society.

To popularize Thirukkural, he organized a two days conference at Chennai on 15/1/1949 and 16/1/1949 which was attended by all the eminent scholars of Tamil at Tamilnadu,irrespective of their political affiliations.Navalar Somasundara Bharatiyar,T.P.Meenakshisundaram,A.chakravarthi nayanar, Thiru.Vi.Ka.,Ka.Appadurai,Thirukkural V.Munusamy and Prof.S.Ilakkuvanar were among the participants.

Ilakkuvanar appreciated the initiative of Periyar and requested him to conduct such conferences in all the districts of the then Madras state.Periyar accepted Ilakkuvanar's proposal to conduct such conferences in all the districts of the then Madras state, and he gave the opportunity to Ilakkuvanar to conduct in Ramnad district at Virudhunagar. He had founded a Thirukkural forum at Virudhunagar under the Presidentship of V.V.Ramasamy, his college correspondent.

Ilakkuvanar mobilized a very larger gathering than the first conference and eminent scholars from all the parts of the then Madras state. The resolutions passed by Ilakkuvanar which got the approval and acceptance of the gathering were futuristic.

1) From high school up to college, Thirukkural should be compulsorily introduced as a compulsory subject. Shakespeare is prescribed as a full-fledged paper for degree courses at college and competitive examinations for government jobs. Just like Shakespeare, Thirukkural should be introduced in these examinations.

2) Legislators and Heads of Institutions should be well versed in Thirukkural. Scholarship in Thirukkural should be made an essential qualification to adorn these positions.

3) Government should take necessary steps to announce a day as Thiruvalluvar day and announce it as a public holiday.

4) This conference requests Thiruchirappalli All India Radio station to announce news about meetings and conferences on Thirukkural and broadcast the lectures.

The above resolutions wholeheartedly accepted by the scholars in the conference, which were considered as dreams of Ilakkuvanar then, have become realities.

The demand for the announcement of a specific day as Thiruvalluvar day has a long history, and that history cannot be narrated in a few pages. Kazhi.Siva.Kannuppila ad Va.subbiah founded a “Thiruvalluvar day academy” (Thiruvalluvar thirunaal kazhagam) to reiterate the need to fix a day for celebrating as Thiruvalluvar day. The role of Kaa.Po.Rathinam from Eezham should also be mentioned here. Eventhough a long debate was going on about a probable date, Tamil scholars decided to fix 2nd Thai (the day next to pongal) as Thiruvalluvar day. Thai first i.e. on Pongal, the Tamil New Year or Thiruvalluvar year begins.

Ilakkuvanar’s dream to introduce Thirukkural as a compulsory subject got a partial success as the then Education minister Avinashilingam introduced Thirukkural as a compulsory subject I High schools.

As per the verdict of Justice R.Mahadevan, from 6th standard to 12th standard Thirukkural was introduced as a compulsory subject and 108 chapters of Thirukkural (Araththuppaal and Porutpaal) were distributed class-wise so that a student entering High school should learn all the 108 chapters without fail.

In Malaysia, from 15th March 2015, Thirukkural was introduced in the syllabi of High schools and universities.

It is needless to elaborate the importance Thirukkural had gained today throughout the world. International organizations like U.N., Indian national organizations like Parliament of India utilize Thirukkural at apt occasions.

Ilakkuvanar’s prolonged propaganda of Thirukkural cannot be described within a few pages. But if a few examples are cited, it will be enough evidence.

Ilakkuvanar was the first scholar to give a series of lectures on Thirukkural. For one year he gave lectures on Thirukkural every Sunday at Pudukottai. This was during 1952 to 1953 by the efforts of Annalaar P.A.Subramaiyanaar, who founded a Thirukkural academy for this activity.

Periyar E.V.R. appreciated this new venture and told that only Mahabaratham ad Ramayana enjoyed such publicity.

Ilakkuvanar was the only Professor to run a journal propagating Thirukkural. He conducted a fortnightly named KuralNeri in Tamil as well as in English. KuralNeri was also published as a daily newspaper for six years from June 1966 to December 1966. ited and published by

The only English fortnightly for spreading Thirukkural was edited and published by Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar and now the mission continues through this publication.

Prof.K.N.Chitsabesan who was a colleague of Ilakkuvanar during his tenure at Thiyagarajar College has consented to be the Chief Editor adorning the Honorary Editorial board. He is spreading the message of Thirukkural throughout the world. Without expecting name or fame he is working continuously to enlighten people on Thirukkural. We should be thankful for this international celebrity who makes people laugh away their worries by his timely wit and thought-provoking humour through his lectures and make people learn the maxims of Kural in an easy way.

Dr Chandrika Subramanian, Solicitor and Barrister, Australia & Founder Tamil Valarchi Manram, Sydney had given her consent to adorn the Honorary Editorial board. Her multifaceted personality as a reputed attorney, popular journalist, and acclaimed author of many books in English and Tamil on various subjects, Translator, orator and social reformer deserve accolades and laurels. We are elated to have her contribution in this Thirukkural mission. Your role as readers is the most important one. Please read and give your valuable feedback to kuralvirtual@gmail.com. Please share this journal with your friends, colleagues and relatives. Your articles on Thirukkural in new angles are also welcome.



The Essence of Artificial Intelligence as Expounded by Thiruvalluvar in Thirukkural

Part 1: Learning is the foundation of intelligence -Prof.Vidya Manian

The author Dr. Vidya Manian is a Professor in the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering and Bioengineering at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, USA. She teaches machine learning and artificial intelligence methods for data discovery. She has graduated three Ph.D. students and currently advises ten doctoral students. She has twenty journal publications in forefront journals such as IEEE transactions, Sensors, Computers, Genes, and Frontier journals. She has 50 conference publications and book chapters in signal, processing including hyper spectral image processing. She is the principal investigator of grants from federal agencies and has contributed extensively to the education of minority under-represented Hispanic students in the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez. She continues her academic and spiritual service through research activities in machine learning and artificial intelligence and exploring the hidden knowledge in ancient Tamil literature. Her father-in-law Sri K. Lakshminarayanan, a devout of Tamil language, diligently followed the instructions of Thiruvalluvar and gave the Thirukkural book to her as a guide for life. She considers it a blessing from him to now be writing on this treasure trove.

In the universe, human beings have proven to be a matchless organism among the infinite life forms that inhabit the planet. Over aeons of time, human beings have developed an intelligence that has evolved and generated peerless discoveries from the fire, invention of the wheel, automobiles, communications, up to today's fastest satellite communications that has shrunk the world smaller day by day. Modern day civilization is wrought with many advancements whose counterparts have been already discovered in some form or other in the Ancient Indian civilization. The likes of the Aeroplane can be found in the pushpaka vimana in the Ramayana, whereas Purananoru mentions about unguided missiles i.e. valavan eva vaanavoorthi. While the modern day scientists investigate science through what appeals to the senses, ancient seers out of the strength of their austerity alone arrived at great Truths which are not yet discovered today. It can be said that only a small percentage of the wisdom of the ancient seers has come to light through modern scientific investigational approach.

Today we have another revolution in technological growth that is happening at a rapid pace and is foreseen to advance the world in several spheres in what is called 'Artificial Intelligence -a modern approach'. Is this a modern approach, we are yet to determine that by taking a deeper look at the Thirukkural written by the Tamil exemplar Thiruvalluvar. He is the only seer who expounded on deep truths of human life, livelihood and virtuous living through his Tamil literary work Thirukkural which has been translated into 41 world languages. Why is this book chosen here to explore a most modern paradigm of Artificial Intelligence? The word Artificial may be a latest terminology, but intelligence, especially human intelligence is as old as creation itself. And it is Thiruvalluvar who has expounded on it in several chapters in his literary work Thirukkural.

Here, we are entering an adventurous expedition to unravel the myth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as envisioned by Thiruvalluvar. First of all, let us define AI as per current day definition: the intelligence demonstrated by machines in performing tasks such as speech recognition, visual perception, decision-making, and translation between languages is called Artificial Intelligence. The main tenet of AI is to impart human-like perception, analysis, reasoning, and judgement to machines in the way of algorithm that can be coded into a software for robotics technology, decision support systems in medicine, security, and defense.

In this article, we shall touch upon the fundamental concept of AI, which is learning. Thiruvalluvar has described the essential qualities of intelligence or arivu in chapter 43 Arivudaimai in 10 verses. In these verses, he expounds on learning and listening, experience in life, mental acumen and mental faculties that save humanity. Learning is the basic paradigm in artificial intelligence, the likeness of which can be deciphered from Thirukkural verses. The machine learns by different methods such as observation, data gathered from sensors, and data provided by several sources.

Thiruvalluvar has mentioned learning in verse 425:

Wisdom embraces frank the world, to no caprice exposed;

Unlike the lotus flower, now opened wide, now petals strictly closed-425

உலகந் தழீஇய தொட்பம் மலர்தலுங்

கூம்பலு மில்ல தறிவு.

Ulakam Thazheeya Thotpam Malardhalum

Koompalum Illa Tharivu.

By Arivu, Thiruvalluvar has referred to learning, he says in this verse that the learned stand at the altar of worldly wisdom with a balanced mind, be it bloom or gloom. Thiruvalluvar also emphasizes the importance of learning.

In verse 427 he says:

The wise discern, the foolish fail to see,

And minds prepare for things about to be-427

அறிவுடையார் ஆவ தறிவார் அறிவிலார்

அஃதறி கல்லா தவர்.

Arivutaiyaar Aava Tharivaar Arivilaar

Aqdhari Kallaa Thavar

This translates as 'the learned use their senses to judge and foresee causes and effects; the uninitiated lack that knowledge'. Learning plays a key role in the development of modern AI systems, without learning the system does not gain any knowledge that can be applied to solving the problem at hand.

We also see how Thiruvalluvar emphasizes learning as the key to intelligence. Subsequently, we shall delve deeper in to how thousands of years ago Thiruvalluvar indeed has talked about the different modes of learning. (continued).

Thirukkural and Interpersonal Skills

-Prof.(Mrs.) S. ARASI

Mrs.Arasi Sivarajan is Head of the PostGraduate and Research department of English at the prestigious Pachaiyappa's College,Chennai. Her special fields are: Black American women writers, Folklore and Children's literature. She is a voracious reader, prolific writer, powerful orator and dedicated Teacher.



Let's start at the very beginning of man's history in the time of his living style. When man moved from being a hunter-gatherer and started to live in groups and families, communication became an inseparable tool, to stay together and live together in peace. He started to communicate to show his emotions, express ideas and to share knowledge in the groups. At times the communication turned out to be unsuccessful. So he invented the lubricant called interpersonal skills that would enhance the communicative wheels to move smoothly. Thiruvalluvar's "Thirukkural" has been a source of never ending knowledge guiding us in various fields of life right from the date of its publication. In Kural, these skills I have chosen to be are the choice of words, good companionship, wisdom shared by friends, emotional intelligence, role of good friends and their importance etc. Valluvar in his everlasting aphoristic writing Thirukkural has expounded these interpersonal skills. My aim is to explain it with the following select couplets.

A word with its power to make or mar the situation comes in the first and foremost place, choice of words helps in smoother transactions and enhances relationship. Valluvar rightly points out the way in which words are to be chosen. It is like choosing the good, sweet and ripe fruits among the unripe ones

இனிய உளவாக இன்னாத கூறல்-
கனி இருப்பக் காய் கவர்ந்தற்று. (100)

iniya ulavāka iṇṇāta kūṛal
kaṇi iruppak kāy kavartarru.

When pleasant words are easy, bitter words to use,
is, leaving sweet ripe fruit, the sour unripe to choose.

After man learnt the technique of choosing the right words for the right place, he became diligent enough to be a person whose wisdom full and ripe is able enough to guide the King himself in his reign. As the Bible quotes in Proverbs 11:14 "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety".

அறனறிந்து மூத்த அறிவுடையார் கேண்மை
திறனறிந்து தேர்ந்துகொளல்.(441)

aṛaṇarintu mūtta aṛivuṭaiyār kēṇmai
tiraṇarintu tērtukoḷal

As friends the men who virtue know, and riper wisdom share,
Their worth weighed well, the king should choose with care.

Having stood by time and tide the good counsel of the person filled with knowledge, man now has to hold on to the good and never leave as to lose a person, who has the capability to choose words and give good counsel is more dangerous than facing limitless foes whose sole intention is to destroy. The destruction of losing a friend who is capable enough to give great counsel is more dangerous.

பல்லார் பகைகொளலிற் பத்தடுத்த தீமைத்தே
நல்லார் தொடர்கை விடல்.(450)

pallār pakaikoḷaliṛ pattaṭutta tīmaittē
nallār toṭarkai viṭal

Than hate of many foes incurred, works greater woe
Ten-fold, of worthy men the friendship to forego.

He now understood the binary nature of things in this world which reminded him that when good counsel exists he should be aware of bad company too that will pull him down. Thus, Words, good counsel, and their companionship is always fruitful, at the same time we should also know that equally destructive is the effect of bad company.

நல்லினத்தினுங்குந் துணையில்லை தீயினத்தின்
அல்லற்படுப்பதூஉம் இல்.(460)
nallinattinūṅkun tuṇaiyillai tīyinattin
allarpaṭuppatūum il

There is no greater help than the company of the good; there is no greater source of sorrow than the company of the wicked.

Having learnt words of quality, with good counsel at his side man now has to establish himself as being capable enough to take a stand for himself, in other words "To Respond or To React?" A question that comes to our mind for which Valluvar rightly puts it that we ought to face vexations with an enduring smile with kindly face which will become the most excelling grace of any man.

ஒறுத்தாற்றும் பண்பினார் கண்ணும் கண்ணோடிப்
பொறுத்தாற்றும் பண்பே தலை.(579)
oruṭṭārrum paṇṇiṇār kaṇṇum kaṇṇōṭip
poruṭṭārrum paṇṇē talai

Patiently to bear with, and show kindness to those who grieve us, is the most excellent of all dispositions.

Companionships of such nature that has the responding nature are to be bound so close that they become inseparable and act on instinct as would the reflex actions of a hand while the vesture slips away.

உடுக்கை இழந்தவன் கைபோல ஆங்கே
இடுக்கண் களைவதாம் நட்பு.(788)
uṭukkai iḷantavaṇ kaipōla āṅkē
iṭukkaṇ kaḷaivatām naṭpu

(True) friendship hastens to the rescue of the afflicted (as readily) as the hand of one whose garment is loosened (before an assembly).

Finally, all the interpersonal skills would teach him that when moving with the higher authorities he should hone his skills so fine that it should be like as we warm ourselves before a bonfire neither too close nor too far and thus we should know the distance to be maintained.

அகலாது அணுகாது தீக்காய்வார் போல்க
இகல்வேந்தர்ச் சேர்ந்தொழுகுவார்.(691)
akalātu aṇukātu tīkkāyvār pōlka
ikalvēntarc cērntoḷukuvār

Who warm them at the fire draw not too near, nor keep too much aloof; Thus let them act who dwell beneath of warlike kings the palace-roof.

This last Kural can be applied to the man – woman friendship that exists and shows the extent to which each other can depend at the same time have their separate families intact.

These few Kural couplets guide us the way to live our life more successfully and happily in compatible bond with our fellow beings. "No man is an island..." Every individual lives in a society, which influences his life, and in turn each individual along with others influence the society. Knowledge is generated and flourishes in a socio-cultural milieu.

Valluvar on Right Conduct

-Dr. R. Prabhakaran, Bel Air, MD, USA

Dr. Prabhakaran was born in Tamil Nadu, India, and migrated to the USA after receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics from Indian universities. Then, he earned his master's and Ph.D. degrees in Computer Science and an MBA degree in Information Management from US universities. In addition to academic positions, he has also held senior-level management positions in private industries. He has been responsible for managing large supercomputing centers at the NASA Research Center and the US Army Research Laboratory in the USA. He is passionate about the Tamil language and literature and has authored books on Puaranaanuuru and Kurunthokai. He has also authored the book "The Ageless Wisdom (As embodied in Thirukkural)," which contains a comparative analysis of Valluvar's ideas with those of modern and ancient scholars and philosophers. He has organized and served as the Coordinator for International Conferences on Thirukkural, Puaranaanuuru, and Kurunthokai. He has delivered several lectures on Thirukkural and Sangam literature-related topics in India and the USA.



Introduction

Ethics and morals relate to "right" and "wrong" conduct. Although they are sometimes used interchangeably, they are different. The word "Ethics" refers to the rules provided by an external source, such as the codes of conduct in workplaces or principles in religions. The term "morals" refers to an individual's own principles regarding right and wrong. An individual gets his ideas regarding right and wrong from religion, society, parents, or self-study and observations. Therefore, an individual's morals are influenced by the ethics of the society in which he lives.

Preference of right conduct over life

Valluvar uses the term right conduct to include an individual's principles regarding the ideal way of conducting himself in a given society. Right conduct results in respect, recognition, reward, and self-satisfaction. Although one excels in knowledge and many virtues, there is nothing better than right conduct to help him attain eminence. Since right conduct results in eminence, Valluvar is convinced that if one has a choice between life and right conduct, one should protect one's right conduct more carefully than one's own life. In other words, leading a life without the right conduct is not really worth it. These ideas can be seen in the following kural:

Right conduct should be carefully preserved and guarded. Though one knows and excels in many virtues, right conduct alone will come to one's aid. (kural – 132)

Since right conduct leads to eminence, it should be preserved more carefully than life itself. (kural – 131)

There are people who are really convinced that right conduct is even more important than life itself. During World War II, the US ship SS Dorchester was struck by a submarine's torpedo and started to sink. The lives of the people in the ship were in grave danger. Lieutenants George Fox, Alexander Goode, John Washington, and Clark Poling were chaplains of varying faiths who were stationed in the sinking ship, the Dorchester. When the ship started to sink, the chaplains quickly rallied the troops together and began handing out life jackets and directed people to safety. When the supply of life jackets ran out, they selflessly gave away their own life jackets. Then, the chaplains joined hands, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship. The Four Chaplains are also sometimes referred to as the "Immortal Chaplains" or the "Dorchester Chaplains". In order to commemorate their brave and selfless sacrifice, in 1948, the United States Postal Service issued a three cents stamp. There is no doubt that the four chaplains valued helping others to survive as more important than their own lives. Like the chaplains, there are countless other examples of people taking life-threatening risks to save others in trouble. These are people who value right conduct more than their own precious lives.

The concept of honor is closely related to that of right conduct. In fact, one's right conduct is the basis of one's honor. Someone who fails to pursue the right conduct is likely to experience criticism by others, bad reputation, guilt, disgrace, and even loss of honor. In Japanese culture, when someone has failed in his duties or found guilty of a significant crime or suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of an enemy or a competitor, they feel that their honor is at stake. Under these circumstances, it is not unusual for some people to commit

suicide. These people resort to these extreme measures because they feel their honor is more valuable than their own lives. William Shakespeare reflects the same sentiment in his play, *Troilus and Cressida*, where he says, "Life every man holds dear; but the dear man holds honor far more precious dear than life."

Valluvar does not recommend suicide as a remedy for loss of honor or reputation. To him, life is precious. Therefore, it should be protected. But right conduct is more important than life. Therefore, one should protect right conduct more carefully than life.

Right Conduct leads to greatness

According to Valluvar, "A man with an envious nature cannot get riches. So also, a man without right conduct will not achieve greatness. (kural – 135)". Envy is defined as a feeling of discontent or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions. Psychologists believe that there are two kinds of envies: the benign kind and the malicious kind. They say that benign envy is healthy, and it motivates an individual to work hard and obtain those things that he desires. On the other hand, malicious envy is unhealthy, and it leads to indignation, frustration, resentment, and anger. As a result, the one with the malicious envy may not get what he desires, including riches. It looks like, Valluvar had the malicious kind of envy in mind for the kural 135.

Strength of character and right Conduct

Though right conduct is the most desirable quality, it is not easy to practice it consistently. Valluvar says that only those with extraordinary willpower and strength of character will always practice the right conduct. He also knows that straying away from right conduct may have severe adverse consequences.

People with strong mind do not swerve from proper conduct. They know its breach will spell ruin. (kural – 136)

Impropriety of conduct leads to disgrace and distress

Even men in high positions sometimes fail to follow the right conduct. There are many examples of people who ended up in disgrace despite all their remarkable achievements. In recent memory, there have been two US presidents who ended up in disgrace. It is not easy to become the most powerful man and the leader of the free world. So far, in the history of the world, there have been only 46 people who have risen to the elevated and the most respected position of US president. Two of them slipped from right conduct despite their phenomenal achievements and ended up in disgrace of historic proportion.

One of them was Richard Nixon, the 37th president of the United States of America. In many respects, President Nixon was an able administrator. He ended the American involvement in the war in Vietnam in 1973, brought home the American prisoners of war, and ended the military draft. Nixon's visit to China in 1972 eventually led to diplomatic relations between the two nations and he initiated détente and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with the Soviet Union in the same year. He enforced the desegregation of Southern schools, established the Environmental Protection Agency, and began the War on Cancer. He was re-elected in one of the largest electoral landslides in U.S. history in 1972 when he defeated George McGovern. But despite all these accomplishments, he got himself involved in the Watergate scandal. His 1972 re-election campaign was involved in the break-in and wiretapping at the Democratic National Committee's (DNC's) headquarters at the Watergate office complex in Washington, D.C. Nixon, and his administration was involved in the cover-up, and Nixon himself was not very truthful. As a result of Nixon's cover-up and illegal activities, he was investigated and was about to be impeached. He resigned before the actual impeachment proceedings.

Another example of a man in a very powerful position who disgraced himself was President Bill Clinton, the 42nd president of the United States of America. Clinton presided over the longest period of peacetime economic expansion in American history. He passed the Welfare Reform Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program. He was very popular and maintained a very high favorable rating throughout his presidency. But his extramarital activities landed him in trouble. He was investigated and found guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice in a sexual scandal case. He was impeached by the House of Representatives and was later acquitted by the US senate. Thus, a powerful man with a brilliant record of accomplishments ended in disgrace because of a lack of moral character.

Valluvar claims that right conduct is a real virtue, and deviation from right conduct will cause disgrace and distress. The downfall of powerful men like Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton is a warning to others that if right conduct is ignored, the consequences can be catastrophic. Valluvar's warning in this regard can be seen in the following kural.

Men obtain greatness from propriety of conduct. Impropriety of conduct results in untold disgrace. (kural – 137)

Propriety of conduct is the seed of virtue. Impropriety of conduct will always cause distress. (kural – 138)

Secular approach to right Conduct

It should be noted that Valluvar's stance on right conduct is different from that of the religions. Religions invoke the concept of sin to ensure that people follow right conduct. In other words, according to religions, not following the right conduct is a sin. In order to avoid committing a sin, religions encourage people to follow the right conduct. According to Valluvar, one should follow the principles of right conduct simply because it is the right thing to do and not for any religious reasons.

Effect of impropriety of conduct upon the family

The ignominy of those who failed to follow the right conduct may also affect their family members. There is a reference to such an incident in Tamil literature. Approximately 2,000 years ago, there was a king by the name Nannan who ruled a small kingdom in Tamil Nadu. In those days, it was customary for the kings to declare a particular tree as their royal tree. According to the prevailing custom, the king Nannan had declared a specific mango tree as his royal tree. Cutting the royal tree or its branches or eating that tree's fruit was considered a significant crime. One day, a young girl was swimming in a river adjoining the royal tree. A fruit from the royal mango tree fell in the river. This girl ate the mango fruit that fell in the river. The palace guards noticed that the girl had eaten the fruit from the royal tree. They went and reported the incident to king Nannan. He declared her guilty and sentenced her to death. The girl's father pleaded for mercy and even told the king that as a penalty for his daughter's act, he would donate 81 elephants to King Nannan. But the king ignored the father's plea and asked the guards to execute the young girl. The guards carried out the order. This incident caused irreparable damage to the reputation of the king, his family, and his progeny. Many years later, a poet refused to hug Nannan's offspring Ilavickko because he was the descendant of Nannan. In other words, ignominy arising from the ruthless act of Nannan affected his descendants. Valluvar warns that if someone fails to follow the right conduct, their family members may also be disgraced, and their reputation may also be discredited.

Right conduct helps to advance the status and dignity of a family; bad conduct destroys the status and dignity of the family. (kural – 133)

What is right conduct?

Admittedly, Valluvar has demonstrated the need for right conduct and the disastrous consequences of failing to pursue right conduct. But one critical question remains to be answered. What does Valluvar consider as right conduct? Valluvar's answer to this question is as follows:

Those who fail to conduct themselves in harmony with the world are ignorant despite their vast learning. (kural – 140)

So, according to Valluvar, right conduct is what is determined as the right conduct by the world. But there are no uniform standards for right conduct in the world. However, different countries and cultures have their own codes of conduct. Therefore, it makes sense to interpret the word "world" as that part of the world where one lives instead of the whole world. Further, what was considered the right conduct in the past may not be regarded as the right conduct at the present time. For example, child marriages were not unusual in India about two centuries ago. Now, it is against the law, and therefore, it is not right conduct for someone to marry a child. Also, in India, widow re-marriage was unacceptable in the past. Today, it is not uncommon. In the past, having a child out of wedlock was considered shameful and unacceptable by American society. As of 2008, about 40.6 percent of children were born to unmarried mothers, and the number of children out of wedlock is increasing. So, right conduct is a function of the community where one lives and the period in which one lives. Valluvar conveys the same idea in another kural in a different context. He says, "It is wisdom to conform to the ways of the world (kural – 426)."

By stating that right conduct is living in harmony with the world, Valluvar has addressed the question in general terms, and his answer is valid for all parts of the world and for all ages. Valluvar adapts the same technique and keeps his remarks general enough in other contexts also. In the chapter on "Education (Chapter-40)", Valluvar says "Whatever is to be learnt should be learnt flawlessly, and after having learnt, live accordingly (kural – 391)." It should be noted that Valluvar does not specify any particular subject. What people study today is vastly different from what was studied during Valluvar's days. If he had provided a list of subjects to be studied, such a list will have no relevance in the modern educational system. In the chapter on the "Glory of Defense Forces (Chapter-77)", he says, "The defense force which is complete in its components and undaunted by setbacks and capable of gaining victory is the chief asset of a ruler (kural – 761)." The modern weaponry and the various components of the defense forces are entirely different from what existed during the days of Valluvar. If he had mentioned the details about the weapons or the components of the defense forces, his statements would no longer be valid. As in the case of education and defense forces, Valluvar uses generalization so that his ideas regarding right conduct will be valid at all times and in all communities and cultures.

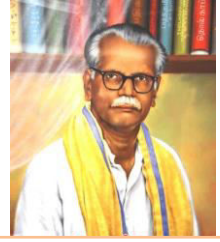
Conclusion

Valluvar considers life as precious, and it should be protected. But, to him, right conduct is more important than life, and therefore right conduct should be protected more carefully than life itself. There are people who risk their lives to help others. The actions of these people validate Valluvar's view on right conduct. Right conduct helps to achieve eminence in one's life. But only those who have the strength of character can pursue right conduct on all occasions. Improper conduct of an individual leads to disgrace and distress not only for him, but also for his family. Valluvar's concept of what is right conduct is not based on any religion. According to him, right conduct is determined by the community and the period in which one lives. Valluvar's approach in adopting the generalizations and avoiding the specifics has enabled his ideas to transcend the boundaries of space and time, and thus his ageless wisdom continues to be universally applicable and eternally valid.



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Gandhi's Tamil teacher Thillaiyadi Vedian Pillai

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Gandhi's Tamil teacher Thillaiyadi Vedian Pillai

- Rajendran Sundaram (Grandson of Vedian Pillai)



(Rajendran Sundaram, (son of the late Shanmugasundaram and Prema Sundaram) is one of the grandsons of Vedian Pillai. Born in Limbe, Malawi and raised in Thanjavur by his maternal grandparents. he studied at school in Thanjavur and college in Trichy and moved to the UK with his parents in 1994 and have been living there ever since. Married and has two sons.)

My grandfather, Thiru. Vedian Pillai, from Thillayadi, Tamil Nadu was a Tamil scholar who went to South Africa when he was very young. He started his career in South Africa by doing small jobs until he got involved in the diamond trade and eventually became the head of the diamond trader's association and a well-respected member of the community in Kimberly, South Africa.

When he started his career, as a lawyer in South Africa, Gandhiji wanted to meet with prominent members of the South Indian community, as seen in the photograph below.

In his letter to Mahatma Gandhi, the famous Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy mentioned about Thirukkural (a Tamil classic, considered as one of the greatest works written on ethics and morality) after reading it Gandhiji was astonished by its wisdom and was fascinated by Thirukkural and the Tamil language. It was at this time that Gandhiji sought help from my grandfather, Thiru. Vedian Pillai, to teach him Tamil as he admired and understood the richness of the Tamil language.

My grandfather, Thiru.Vedian Pillai taught Gandhiji to write his name in Tamil and the two of them also exchanged letters regularly, as seen in the pictures below and he was the first person to bring him to Tamil Nadu, who then went on to visit Tamil Nadu many more times. Tamil Nadu, Tamil language and Tamil people influenced Gandhiji a lot in his ideals of non-violence, anti-racism and also giving up his modern clothes for the simple, traditional attire he is known for.

For several days, Gandhiji stayed with my grandfather, Thiru. Vedian Pillai, they shared a mutual respect for each other. Being a diamond merchant, my grandfather, Thiru. Vedian Pillai, used to wear diamond studs in his ears and a diamond studded tie pin. It was at that time my grandfather was influenced by Gandhiji's simple way of life and so he stopped wearing his diamond accessories and adopted a simple lifestyle as well. My grandfather, Thiru. Vedian Pillai and Gandhiji discussed many different things, but one of the most important things they spoke about was when my grandfather said if India wants to develop and compete on a global scale, then women need to be educated and that he wanted to build a school for girls in Thillayadi. Hearing this, Gandhiji was amazed and praised my grandfather for his progressive thinking and told him that he would attend the school's inauguration. In 1915 my grandfather started a school for girls called Sudharma Balika Padasalai. At that time it was very uncommon for girls to attend school, so in order to persuade parents to send their daughters to the school and also to encourage girls to be educated, my grandfather announced that he would provide free lunch to the girls who attended the school. As a result, many parents started to send their daughters to the school. After a few years, the great freedom fighter

Thiru. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai visited the school and enquired about the girls eating lunch at the school, my grandfather explained that he provided free meals to convince parents to send their daughters to the school.

Thiru. V.O. Chidambaram Pillai was so impressed with this idea that he later shared it with Thiru. Kamaraj, who later on introduced free school meals across Tamil Nadu when he became the Chief Minister. This was acclaimed in India and worldwide too.

It amazes me and fills me with pride as to how my beloved Grandfather came up with this brilliant idea? Could it be because he is from the lineage of the great poet and saint Thayumanavar?



The arrow points to Thiru. Vedian Pillai.



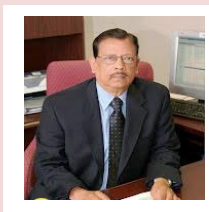
The girls' school founded by Vedian Pillai at Thillayadi

Gandhi's signature in Tamil

சுமார். ச. மார்து



Valluvar on Forbearance



Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Bel Air, Maryland, USA

Dr.R.Prabhakaran deserves all of our appreciation for his dedicated propagation of Thirukkural throughout the U.S. by his writings in journals and net and by his speeches in TV and internet continuously for more than two decades. His commentary of Puaranaanuuru is hailed by Tamil scholars. An industrial magnate-turned literary celebrity, he functions just like an one-man university to spread and impart the knowledge of Thirukkural and Sangam classics among the Tamil Diaspora in U.S.

Introduction

The words “forbearance” and “patience” are considered synonyms. But they do not mean exactly the same thing. Forbearance is patient self-control, restraint, and tolerance under provocation, while patience is the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset. In other words, forbearance implies patience under provocation, while patience is simply the capacity to tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering where there is no provocation involved.

Although the concept of forbearance has been around for a long time, it was not always practiced in real life. Hammurabi was the sixth king of the First Babylonian Dynasty, reigning from 1792 BC to 1750 BC. His lasting contribution to western society was his set of laws written on twelve stones and displayed publicly for all to see, the most common being, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth." The original intent of the law was that the punishment should match the crime. Later, it has come to be associated with retaliation for any harm done to someone. The affected person retaliates against the one who hurt him in the same way he was hurt. However, it should be noted that Hammurabi’s code was not universally accepted. Most religions

have always advocated the avoidance of conflicts and adopting forbearance as the preferred way to handle insults and provocations. An example of extraordinary forbearance can be seen in the Bible. When Jesus Christ was crucified, he prayed to God and asked Him to forgive those who crucified him (Luke 23:34). Along the lines of Jesus Christ, Valluvar also promoted forbearance as the ideal way to handle provocations. He has dedicated a chapter on forbearance (Chapter 16 of the Kural) where he emphasizes the merits and advantages of forbearance.

Forbearance is a virtue

When confronted with insults and harmful actions against us by others, our most natural reaction is to retaliate. Valluvar says it is better to exercise self-control and tolerate their misbehavior. In other words, he recommends forbearance as the preferred approach. According to him, those who want to retain all their virtues should practice forbearance. Those who neglect to exercise forbearance will retaliate in anger and deviate from other virtues. In order to emphasize the importance of forbearance, Valluvar cites the example of the earth, which tolerates and supports even those who dig it.

If a man wants to retain his fullness of virtue, he should cherish the practice of forbearance. (Kural-154)

Like the earth that supports even those who dig it, it is the supreme virtue to be patient with those who scorn you. (Kural-151)

Retaliation, forbearance, doing good in return and forgetting

Retaliation and forbearance: There are those who, by virtue of their power, position, or status, tend to be arrogant and mistreat others. According to Marcus Aurelius (121 AD – 180 AD), the Roman emperor, “The best revenge is not to copy him who wronged you (Marcus Aurelius, Book VI-6).” Valluvar is in complete agreement with Marcus Aurelius. According to Valluvar, when confronted by the insults and transgressions by others, it is better to tolerate rather than to retaliate. While retaliation gives only temporary satisfaction, tolerance will bring lasting fame. The wise men of the world will have high regard for those who practice patience under provocations. Valluvar says that forbearance of the excesses of a fool

indicates excellent strength of character. In fact, he suggests that one should conquer others' arrogance by forbearance. These ideas can be seen in the following kural:

Even if an untoward evil is done unto you, it is better not to resent and do an unrighteous deed. (Kural-157)

Retaliation gives only momentary joy. But forbearance gives everlasting glory. (Kural-156)

Not being able to feed a guest is the most abject poverty. Enduring the excesses of a fool is the strength of all strengths. (Kural-153)

The wise will not hold the avengers in high esteem. But they will regard the tolerant as a treasure of gold. (Kural-155)

With tolerance, one should conquer those who do harm due to their arrogance. (Kural-158)

Doing good in return, and forgetting: Obviously, forbearance is a great virtue.

Although forbearance is good, the fact that someone caused the transgression might be in the back of our minds. That lingering thought might make us uneasy and may even create a feeling of hostility. Therefore, it is better to forget the whole incident so that our mind is at peace. This is precisely why Valluvar says that forgetting the transgressions of others is even better than forbearance (Kural – 152).

In fact, according to Valluvar, one can do better than forbearance and forgetting. When it comes to handling the harmful actions of others, Valluvar agrees with Seneca (4 BC – 65AD), the Roman philosopher, statesman and dramatist who says, “Unkindness must be treated with kindness (Book 27 – III).” But, unlike other philosophers, Valluvar has a unique approach to handling others' evil words, deeds, and provocations. In fact, he says, “The best punishment for those who do evil to you

is to shame them by returning good for evil and after doing good in return, just forget the evil that was done to you as well as the good deed you did (kural – 314).” This amazing statement by Valluvar serves as a testimony for his wisdom and kindness. This is one of the remarkable kurals worthy of being remembered and always followed by everyone. So, with regard to provocations of others, the right sequence of actions is as follows: 1) ignore the incidence and use forbearance, 2) do something good in return so that the transgressor will be vexed, and finally 3) forget the incidence as well as the good deeds that was done in return.

People with forbearance are better than the ascetics

The ascetics are known for tolerating pain and suffering with great patience. They sacrifice all the worldly comforts including having regular meals. Although the sufferings of the ascetics are self-inflicted, their self-control is truly admirable. According to Valluvar, those who practice forbearance are superior to ascetics.

One who patiently bears the harsh words of a transgressor is purer than an ascetic. (Kural – 159)

Those who endure insults are better than those who do penance by fasting.(Kural – 160)

Conclusion

Although it is human nature to seek revenge on those who do harm to them, it is better to tolerate others’ unkind words and deeds with forbearance. Such forbearance is a great virtue, and it will bestow everlasting glory. Admittedly, continuing to practice forbearance is difficult. But it is an act of purity and kindness and as a virtue, it is even better than the penance of the ascetics. Returning good for evil is even better than forbearance. Forgetting the unkindness of others and the kindness and goodness shown to them is the best course of action that one should follow to counteract others’ misdeeds.

A Historic Judgment

On 26.04.2016, a **Judgment** by the Honorable Mr. Justice R.Mahadevan advised the Government of Tamilnadu that every student should compulsorily learn the 108 chapters of Thirukkural during his school education, in a phased manner.

The learned Justice has also reiterated the need of the moral education at the school level and had explained how Thirukkural acts as a leading light imparting positive approach and pragmatic lifestyle during the juvenile period.

We salute the Honorable Mr. Justice R.Mahadevan for his timely action in prescribing a needful remedy for the emanating social evils which try to shatter the pillars of our society.

We wish to bring the attention of our readers the observations of the esteemed Justice, his introduction of Thirukkural and valuable advice about the need of introducing Thirukkural as a compulsory subject in school education.

Excerpts from the Judgment of the Madurai bench of Madras High court delivered on: 26.04.2016 by The Honorable Mr. Justice R.Mahadevan, instructing the Government of Tamilnadu that the first two chapters of Thirukkural viz. Araththuppaal and Porutpaal, containing 108 Adhigarams must be included in the syllabus and implemented in a phased manner.

“39.14. The chapters till 108 deal with virtues, administration and importance of wealth. The foundation for democracy and its limits are also evident. Knowledge is power. Knowledge of all the couplets and their use in day to day life will leave the power at the hands of people who are not only intelligent but also virtuous.

40. The above extracts from Thirukkural are pulsating and if put into practice will certainly pave way for better humans, in turn a better society, in turn a better country, in turn a better nation. Children, whose quest for knowledge is unlimited, should be drawn into principles at an early age so that they are not deviated. The future of every country lies at the hands of younger generation. It is the duty of the state to

show them the rightful path and there is no other better philosophy than what is preached in Thirukkural.

41. Undoubtedly, the other literary works Mahabaratham, Agananooru, Purananooru, Aathisoodi, Silapathigaram, Kambaramayanam, Manimegalai, etc also teach moral philosophies, but not to the extent and depth of Thirukkural without affiliations and godly intervention. In fact in Thirukkural No 619 "Deivathal Agatheninum Muyarchi Than Mei varutha Kooli tharum" implying, even if god does not give, hard work would definitely yield results.

42. The epic, Mahabaratham as we all know though preaches various moralities, is webbed around the quest for power and individual lives of kings and gods.

Agananooru, comprises of 400 poems dealing with love and separation. Purananooru, comprises of 400 poems dealing with war, politics, wealth, etc. The above poems reflect only in portions the high moral values preserved during the sangam period. They do not offer any solution. In so far Aathisoodi is concerned, it could be said to be the extract of Thirukkural in simple language.

Avvaiyar, who wrote the aathisoodi in her own words, has said the following about Thirukkural:

"Anuvai thulaithu ezhkadalai pugati kuruga tharitha kural" "Splitting an atom and Letting deep Ocean inside it and making so compact and powerful Words"

43. Various other personalities have divested their views on Thirukkural as follows:

GU Pope observed:

"Outweighs the whole of remaining Tamil literature, & is one of the select numbers of great works, which have entered into the very soul of a whole people & which can never die."

"Thirukkural is as clear as an unpolluted spring. Yes! Thirukkural, the unique book, has come to remove the impurities of this world."

John Lazarus:

The moral soil of Tamil Nadu.

To quote, EV Daniel, “There are no “thou-shalt-do this and thou-shalt- not-do that.” ‘The Kural is a book with sharp observations of real life, a deep understanding of human weaknesses and strengths, and wise suggestions as to how we can live up to our fullest capacities as free human beings.’

Archbishop Trench on Thiruvalluvar and Thirukkural: “He abounds in short and memorable, and, if I might so call them, epigrammatic sayings, concentrating with forceful brevity the whole truth which he desires to impart into some single phrase.”

Reverend P Percival wrote, “Nothing in the whole compass of human language can equal the force and terseness of the couplets in which the author of the Kural conveys the lessons of wisdom.”

Albert Schweitzer:

“There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find such lofty wisdom as in Thirukkural.”

Subramaniya Bharati wrote, “The outstanding greatness of Tamil Nadu was that it gave Valluvar to the world.”

Professor Moriz Winternitz (1863-1937) an eminent Austrian orientalist says, “Valluvar’s Kural is one of the gems of the world literature. He (Valluvar) stands above all races, castes, and sects, and what he teaches is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder, that the Kural has been read, studied and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but also found many admirers in the west, ever since it has become known.”

44. Going by what has been pleaded and not disputed, the Government of Tamil Nadu itself has been attempting to promote Thirukkural, though not as an independent subject but in other forms like competitions, seminars, etc, the same preference has not been given to other literary works, where moral preachings are only a part. This implies the supremacy of Thirukkural over the other portions.

45. The other portions of the syllabus though deal with morality as an undertone; primarily depict the story of individuals. They are mostly known for their artistic excellence rather than to the context. Contrarily, Thirukkural lays down the path to be observed by each individual in various spheres namely, moral, professional, business, political, management, chaste, family, Psychology, love, sex, etc. it lays down the mode of life to be lived by every individuals in the society. It is beyond all religions and is ever applicable. It has withstood the test of time. Above all, it gave us the Mahatma to this country. In his own words:

“I taught Tamil only to enable me to study Thiruvalluvar’s Kural through his mother tongue itself. There is none who has given such a treasure of wisdom like him.”

46. Interestingly, Mahatma was drawn to Thirukkural by none other than Leo Tolstoy, who has quoted the Couplets of chapter 32 namely ‘Inna Ceyyamai’ or ‘Not doing evil’. That is a chapter, which deals with the necessity to desist from causing harm to others even if one is hurt by the action of others. It propels the necessity of tolerance, nonviolence and doing good things.

47. Taking the cue from Thirukkural and marching on the virtues of Non- violence and non-falsehood, Mahatma Gandhiji inspired all sections of the society in the struggle for freedom and succeeded. He has inspired many other great leaders and like Thiruvallur, attained immortality following the saint himself. Well, the need of the hour, though may not be another Mahatma, but souls which can make this place a better place to live, in confirmation with the fundamental rights. *Therefore, this Court is of the firm view, that it is Thirukkural which alone has all that it takes to take the younger generation in righteous path.*

48. Undoubtedly, when the seeds are cultivated early, the result would be fruitful. When, the young minds of this country are taught about the moral philosophies and methods as contained in Thirukkural, we can expect a better reformed generation, not only in moral aspect but also in political and commercial management. That, would definitely take the nation into a progressive mode.

49. It has been contended by the Special Government Pleader appearing for the respondents that inclusion of entire Thirukkural as a subject would increase the burden on the students. On accepting and quoting Aristotle “The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet”, this Court finds that to a student, every subject is difficult, unless it is studied. It is a difficult phase of life, where the students feel that they are forced to in fact study. It is only at a later stage, that they realize the importance of education. Maths and science are considered to be most difficult subjects for school students throughout the world and there are several reports to the effect. The Government has never had any second thoughts to reduce the portions as they are considered as necessary for the academic development and future of a student. Moral science is equally important and if not more. A mere intelligent but a person without moral aptitude can ruin the society more than an unintelligent person with morals. The plea is not to increase the working hours. Rather it is only to teach Thirukkural as a separate subject/division in subject. Hence, this Court is unable to accept the contention of the respondents that increasing the number of kurals would cast a burden on the students.

50. When the object is to create a better society and to safeguard the fundamental rights, it is for the respondents to devise a mechanism to achieve the object. The works of William Shakespeare have invariably been included as a portion throughout the world and also in India. Though, the fictional stories contain moral values, globalisation has been made by the land of origin. Whereas, a philosophy, accepted throughout the world to be of highest value must be taught entirely at the school level itself. It is also pertinent to mention here that the Government has already made Tamil a compulsory subject and has been implemented in a phased manner. Similar, steps are also taken for Central and other boards in the state. In view of the fact, that Thirukkural has already been translated in English, French, Hindi, German, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and many other regional languages, it can be taught wholly.

51. insofar as the contention of the learned Special Government Pleader appearing for the respondents that the 3rd Chapter, considering the sensitivity of the subject, the same need not be included in the syllabus. However, the first two chapters

containing 108 Adhigarams must be included in the syllabus preferably from the next academic year and implemented in a phased manner.

52. It was brought to the knowledge of this court that the syllabus is determined by the committee appointed by the government. It is pertinent to mention here, the policy is framed by the government in consonance with and to preserve the fundamental rights under Part III of the Constitution. Once a policy is framed, then it is a matter of accommodation. If there is a will, there would be a way. It will be the greatest contribution to the society and to the language itself by the government. Various adaptations and stories, associated with Thirukkural in the form of “Thirukkural kathaigal”. Therefore, it can be taught to the students without causing burden. Moral values are more important than other values. Once, the moral values are lost, it is only a matter of time, before the person falls, despite possessing all other qualities, which may earn in name, fame, power and money. If Thirukkural is taught with all its avenues and dimensions elaborately, the students would be equipped with all the facets of life, the probable problems and the solutions. The couplets about friendship, hard work, good character, patience, tolerance and confidence will guide them through, even the most difficult of times. Thirukkural will give them the inner strength to withstand any storm. Therefore, this Court commends that appropriate action must be taken by the government through the committee which decides the syllabus, considering the noble objective and the demanding situation and finalize the syllabus for the next academic year by including 108 Chapters/ Adhigarams of Thirukkural (Arathupal and Porutpaal) in the curriculum of students between VI Standard to XII Standard, keeping in mind that the purpose of education must be to build a nation with moral values.”



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Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen

A Mauritian Statesman and a dedicated follower of Thirukkural

On a mission to get proclamation of Thirukkural as a “Book of Universal Literature” by UNESCO

Published by:International Thirukural Virtual Institute

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Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen

On a mission to get proclamation of Thirukkural as a “Book of Universal Literature” by UNESCO

Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen (born in 1951) is a Mauritian politician, social worker, and former minister. His ancestors migrated to Mauritius from Tamil Nadu many years ago. After completing his secondary education at Friendship College (Goodlands) and Bhujoharry College (Port Louis), he started working as a teacher at Friendship College while continuing his tertiary education at the University of Mauritius. In 1978 he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Administration.

Dr. Parsuramen's political career started as president of the Village Council of Petit Raffray in 1978. In 1979 he became president of the Northern District Council. He was elected to Mauritius parliament for the first time in 1982. He was again elected to parliament at the 1983, 1987, and 1991 general elections. During the four consecutive terms in office, Dr. Parsuramen served as Minister of Education, Arts and Culture, and Minister of Education and Science. As Minister of Education, Arts and Culture and Minister of Education and Science he provided excellent leadership in the field of education and he has been credited with being the architect of the Mauritian 10-Year Education Master Plan, which spearheaded the development of Mauritius Education system.

After highly appreciated services in Mauritius, Dr. Parsuramen became a dedicated and renowned International Civil Servant. He joined the World Bank in 1997, as Education Policy Advisor and Coordinator of the education component of the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa (UNSI) administered by the World Bank. In 1998, he was appointed Director of UNESCO's Division for the Renovation of Secondary and Vocational Education; and in 2000 he became Director of the same organization's Regional Bureau for Education in Africa before returning to UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in 2004 to lead both the Secretariat of UNESCO Executive Board and that of its Governing Bodies; serving therefore as Secretary of both the Executive Board and the General Conference. In 2009, Dr. Parsuramen was appointed Director of UNESCO, New Delhi Office and Representative to Bhutan, India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka, where he served tirelessly until June of 2011 when he retired and returned home to Mauritius.

In 2011 Dr. Parsuramen founded the Global Rainbow Foundation to assist people with paraplegia and disabled Mauritians to purchase prosthetics at low prices. He also started his campaign against the prevention of amputations. In addition to his involvement in the Global Rainbow Foundation, he enthusiastically serves in several capacities in various non-profit organizations. His current assignments include the following:

Founder-President University of Third Age (Mauritius) (a charitable trust)
 Chairman University of Mauritius Convocation 2016
 Honorary Chairman, Gandhi Breed Ashram, Petit Raffray, Mauritius
 Chairman, International Committee of We Care Film Festival on disability issues
 Member of Governing Board, Institute of Asian Studies, Tamil Nadu, India
 Member of the Executive Council, Council of Religions, Mauritius
 Member of the Governing Board, Study International School, Pondicherry, India
 Trustee Srinivasa Ramanujan Trust (Mauritius)

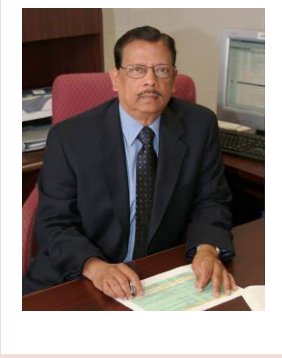
Dr. Parsuramen has been conferred an Honorary Doctorate by the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Chancellor of Tamil University, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu for his contribution to the field of education. He has also received the prestigious award of ULAGA THAMIZHAR MAAMANI “The Crown Jewel of World Tamils” from The Madras Development Society on the Occasion of the 2nd World Tamil Economic Conference 2011. In addition to these awards, he has also received numerous international awards.

Throughout his life, Dr. Parsuramen has been very passionate about Thirukkural. He has started a campaign to get UNESCO to recognize Thirukkural as a “Book of Universal Literature”. To accomplish his goal, he has formed an organization called International Thirukkural Foundation. He is working through his organization in collaboration with other Thirukkural organizations in Australia, India, and Europe. Under the auspices of the International Thirukkural Foundation, he has been organizing a monthly lecture series on Thirukkural related topics. He plans to collect the transcripts of the lectures and publish them as a book. He is also working with the Central Government of India and the State Government of Tamil Nadu so that they can make a formal request to UNESCO to declare Thirukkural as a “Book of Universal Literature”. Once the formal request is made, he plans to organize a Thirukkural Conference in Paris, France, and invite the UNESCO executives, present them the book, and make a request to UNESCO to declare Thirukkural as a “Book of Universal Literature”.

We wish to appeal all the Tamils-spread throughout the world-to co-operate with him in this endeavor in all possible ways. By our persistent and united efforts we can approach and get suitable proceedings done in a swift manner from both the Union and State governments to accomplish this noble venture.

Dr. R. Prabhakaran

--A Missionary of Thirukkural in U.S.A.



Dr. Prabhakaran was in Mannargudi, Tamil Nadu. He graduated with a B.Sc. degree in Mathematics from University of Madras , Chennai, and M.Sc. degree in Mathematics from Annamalai University. Chidambaram. After working as a lecturer in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu for six years, he migrated to the USA and obtained his M.S. and Ph.D. in Computer Science and MBA in Information Management from U.S. universities. He has held senior positions in private companies, and he has also managed and directed Supercomputing facilities in NASA and U.S. Army.

Dr. Prabhakaran is deeply involved in Tamil language, Tamil literature, Tamil culture, and the welfare of Tamil people. He has served as President of the Washington Tamil Association, Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Foundation, and Vice President of the Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA).

In 2003, Dr. Prabhakaran founded the Tamil Literary Study Group in Washington, D.C. Under the auspices of this group, he conducted classes to teach Tamil literary classics such as Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, Kurunthokai, Silapthikaram, History of Tamil Literature, Naaladiyaar, etc. The Tamil Literary Study Group in Washington, D.C., which Dr. Prabhakaran started, serves as a model for the Tamils in many cities in the United States to gather and study Thirukkural and Sangam literature.

He has coordinated and successfully conducted major international conferences in the USA on Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, and Kurunthokai. Recently, he served as the Coordinator for the Thirukkural Essay Competition for high schools students in the USA.

Dr. Prabhakaran has authored several blogs on Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, Kurunthokai, and other Tamil literary classics. His blogs are routinely visited and studied by thousands of Tamils in the USA, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the U.K., Russia, and many other countries.

Dr. Prabhakaran has published his commentaries on Puranaanuuru and Kurunthokai. He has also published his essays in English on Thirukkural as a book under the title, “The Ageless Wisdom (As embodied in Thirukkural).” His next book on Thirukkural, “புதிய பார்வையில் திருக்குறள்” will be released soon.

He has delivered several lectures on Thirukkural and Puranaanuuru in various cities in the USA and India. Recently, he completed a series of thirty-two lectures on Thirukkural on American Tamil Radio. His lectures are available on YouTube.

Dr. Prabhakaran considers promoting Thirukkural and Sangam Literature in western countries as his mission in life. He lives with his wife Geetha in Maryland, USA.

Valluvar's Prescriptions for the Pressing Problems of the World

Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Bel Air, Maryland, USA

Abstract

In the four millennia there have been many philosophers, sages, and saints. Among all of them, Thiruvalluvar stands apart as a beacon light guiding the humanity with his immortal wisdom. The world has always been experiencing several serious problems. Thiruvalluvar's guidelines offer practical solutions to the problems of the world. This paper examines Thiruvalluvar's solutions for poverty, diseases, violence, and environmental degradation. His solutions are consistent with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. Although the solutions are different for the different problems, love seems to be the common factor in Thiruvalluvar's approach to solving these problems. Thiruvalluvar contends that love is the quintessence of life. His message is one of love, truth, and non-violence. His approach is secular, and his ideas are universally acceptable. His message will help to make this world a better place for all.

[This is the transcript of the lecture delivered by Dr. Prabhakaran at the International Thirukkural Foundation, Mauritius on August 21, 2021.]

Introduction

In the course of human history, there have been many philosophers, prophets, sages, and saints who have contributed to the development of religious and philosophical ideas. The Vedas are considered to be the oldest religious and philosophical text. Historians surmise that the Rig Veda, the oldest of the four Vedas, was composed during the period 1500 BC to 1000 BC. The monotheistic religion of Judaism founded by Moses almost 3500 years ago is one of the oldest religions of the world. After the early Vedic period and the beginnings of Judaism, the sixth and the fifth centuries BC seem to have been the time when many philosophical ideas simultaneously blossomed around the world. During the sixth century BC, Mahavira and the Buddha appeared in the Indian philosophical scene. Contemporaneously to Mahavira and the Buddha, Confucius, the

most renowned Chinese philosopher, preached civic humanism, morality, ethics, and social order in the Far East.

Socrates was the most pre-eminent philosopher in the western hemisphere during the fifth century BC. Although Socrates did not leave any written documents behind, Plato, his contemporary, and Aristotle, Plato's disciple, have abundantly described Socrates's contribution to Western philosophy. Based on their writings, scholars agree that the dialectical reasoning methodology proposed by Socrates is the foundation for the entire western philosophical system. Plato and Aristotle have also made their own contributions to the development of western philosophy.

Although there were significant developments in philosophical thought during the sixth and fifth centuries BC, that period did not have a monopoly in that field. There have been many outstanding philosophers and religious leaders in many parts of the world after the fifth century BC. Two major religions of the world, Christianity, and Islam were founded based on the teachings of Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed during the first and the seventh century AD, respectively. Over the past two thousand years, several other outstanding philosophers have made remarkable contributions to the philosophical and religious ideologies of the world.

Thiruvalluvar and Thirukkural¹

About two thousand years ago, in Tamil Nadu, India, there was an extraordinary man, an outstanding philosopher who analyzed almost all aspects of human life and offered practical guidelines for a purposeful life on earth. Scholars consider his ideas to be eternally valid and universally acceptable. His name is Thiruvalluvar or Valluvar for short. His legacy is his *magnum opus* called Thirukkural or the Kural for short. The Kural is considered a veritable guide for the "Art of Living." Valluvar is very well known in the state of Tamil Nadu, where people of all ages study

¹ In Tamil, the word "kural" means a two-line verse (couplet). Valluvar's book consists of 1330 kurals. The term "Thiru" is an honorific prefix to the book of kurals and hence his book is called Thirukkural. The term "the Kural" (with an upper case K) is used to refer to the book and the word "kural" (with a lower case k) is used to refer to the individual couplet.

his book. Professor Moriz Winternitz, an eminent Austrian orientalist says, "Valluvar's Kural is one of the gems of the world literature. He (Valluvar) stands above all races, castes, and sects, and what he teaches is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder that the Kural has been read, studied, and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but also found many admirers in the west, ever since it has become known." Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the German philosopher, physician, and Nobel laureate, admired Valluvar's positive view of the world and life as opposed to the "world and life negation" preached by the religions of India. Leo Tolstoy, the famous Russian novelist, was very impressed by Valluvar's ideas on non-violence. Also, Mahatma Gandhi was so fascinated by the Kural that he wanted to learn the Tamil language so that he can study the original version of the Kural. The Russians are said to have preserved important books of lasting value in the Kremlin in an indestructible Tungsten chamber so that they may outlast even a nuclear attack and be useful to the posterity. The Kural is one of the books in that chamber.

Many other scholars and philosophers from various parts of the world have recognized and admired Valluvar's profound and yet pragmatic view of human life and the practical guidelines he has offered for a purposeful life. The Kural is considered one of the most widely translated non-religious works in the world. It has been translated into about 41 languages of the world, and there are more than 50 translations in English alone.

Assuming that Valluvar was born about 2000 years ago, the primary religions in Tamil Nadu as well as in India during that time were the Vedic religion (the forerunner of the modern-day Hinduism), Jainism, and Buddhism. In the Kural, we see some similarities with those religions. But Valluvar differs significantly from those religions. He advocates rationalism and his book is secular. While religions focus on life after death, Valluvar's concern is about this life on earth. He offers guidelines for this life on earth. Even though the society has drastically changed in the past two thousand years, Valluvar's Kural stands tall as a beacon light guiding humanity. He has proposed valid solutions for the problems we face today and perhaps for the problems we may face in the future.

United Nations's Sustainable Development Goals

These days, the world is facing many problems. In 2015 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a set of goals known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all." These goals are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

What are the pressing problems of today? The most pressing problems of the world today are **poverty, diseases, violence, and environmental degradation**. These problems are not new. They have been around for a long time.

First Major Problem – Poverty

What is poverty?

Poverty refers to lacking enough resources to provide the necessities of life such as food, clean water, shelter, clothing, access to health care, education, and other basic amenities. Judging by this definition, poverty has been a plague upon the society for an awfully long time.

Poverty has Been a Problem for a Long Time

During the Dark Age in Greece (1,100 BC – 750 BC), palaces burned, people left their land and settlements and migrated to new settlements. The Dark Age was the time of worst poverty Greece was ever in, leading to homelessness. Later, in the Classical Period, during the Peloponnesian war, a plague hit Greece, and a third of the population died. Refugees had no water or sanitation, and they were scattered everywhere.

Ancient Roman society was divided into two major classes: the Plebeians (the poor) and the Patricians (the rich). In Ancient Rome, 95% of the citizens lived at or below the poverty level. Impoverished neighborhoods were crowded, dirty, and highly vulnerable to robbery and murder. The Plebeians lived in extremely unsanitary conditions. Since a large number of people lived in unsanitary conditions, infectious diseases were widespread among the poor. Each year thousands of people died in Rome from contagious diseases. Therefore, the Plebeians lived like the homeless people live today.

Although stratification of the society into classes and castes has been responsible for extreme poverty among the so-called lower classes in ancient India, there was severe poverty in other sections of the society also. Sangam literature documents extreme poverty of some of the Tamil poets and musicians.

In the ancient days, poverty was not limited only to Greece, Rome, and India. There was widespread poverty in all parts of the world. Poverty continued to exist during the Middle Ages, and even today, there is poverty in many countries of the world.

- 85% of the world live on less than \$30 per day,
- Two-thirds live on less than \$10 per day, and
- 10% of the people live on less than \$1.90 per day.
- Many millions of people live on much less than \$1.90 per day.

As the economic writer Henry Hazlitt has observed, “the history of poverty is almost the history of mankind.”

Valluvar on Poverty

Valluvar considers that there is nothing that afflicts one like poverty does (Kural² – 1041). He adds that when cruel poverty comes on, it destroys the joys of this life and the future (kural – 1042). He contends that the misery caused by poverty is so severe that one may even sleep in the midst of fire but not in the midst of poverty (kural – 1049). Here, Valluvar seems to take the poetic license and exaggerates that one can sleep in the midst of the fire. Nobody can really sleep in the midst of fire. But it is indeed impossible to sleep in the midst of poverty. If a man does not know how he will feed his family tomorrow, how can he sleep tonight? He may not be able to sleep even for a minute.

² . Tamil versions of the kural's referenced in this paper are provided in Appendix - A

Valluvar says that the unbearable misery of poverty brings along with it several other undesirable consequences (kural – 1045). According to Valluvar, the state of poverty will totally destroy the honor and the glory of one's ancestry (kural – 1043). He adds that poverty will force even men of high birth to the moral weakness of speaking mean words (kural – 1044). The poor people will not be recognized for their talents. He mentions that though the words of the poor are sound in thought and clear in expression, they will not be heeded by others (kural – 1046). Finally, Valluvar is of the opinion that even a mother will treat her son as a stranger if his poverty is not associated with virtue (kural – 1047). These statements by Valluvar reveal that he was fully aware of the misery caused by poverty and the consequences of poverty.

What are the Causes of poverty?

We can think of four major sets of causes for poverty. 1) First major set of causes includes the individual's laziness, lack of motivation, and lack of interest in education. People like this will eventually end up poor. **These may be called the behavioral causes of poverty.** 2) Second major set of causes includes wars, conflicts, lack of infrastructure, government's unresponsiveness to people's needs, lack of welfare programs, poor sanitation, poor public works, lack of affordable healthcare, etc. These causes are related to the malfunctioning and or inefficiencies of the government. **These are institutional causes of poverty.** 3) The third major set of causes of poverty includes natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, droughts, pandemics, climate change, etc. **These may be called the natural causes of poverty.** 4) Finally, the fourth major set of causes of poverty is social injustice, inequality, and discriminations. **These are the societal causes of poverty.**

Valluvar's Solution for the Eradication of Poverty Due to Behavioral Causes

Poverty from behavioral causes is self-imposed by the individuals. Thirukkural contains a chapter on "Not Being Lazy," a chapter on "On Energy and Enthusiasm," a chapter on "Perseverance," a chapter on "Education," and a chapter on "Illiteracy." In the chapter on "Not Being Lazy," Valluvar says, "If a man is lazy and has no enthusiasm, his family will be destroyed, and their crimes will multiply (kural – 604)." To emphasize the importance of enthusiasm, Valluvar

says, “Only those who possess enthusiasm have everything, and those without enthusiasm have nothing even if they have everything (kural – 591).” He praises perseverance by saying, “Perseverance leads to prosperity; effortlessness results in poverty (kural – 616).” He emphasizes the value of learning by saying, “Learning is the imperishable riches; all other things are not real riches (kural – 400)”. He condemns the uneducated people as beasts (kural – 410). In these and other kurals, Valluvar advises people against laziness and encourages them to advance in life by acquiring the required knowledge and skills. These are Valluvar’s prescriptions for helping individuals to extricate themselves from poverty.

Valluvar’s Solution for Poverty from Other Three Causes

It is the government’s responsibility to avoid unnecessary wars, to ensure that the country has good infrastructure, welfare programs, affordable healthcare, employment opportunity, and unemployment benefits. Also, the government should have effective plans to handle natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, droughts, pandemics, etc. Valluvar says, “The king must protect his subjects (kural – 549).” In another kural, he mentions, “As the whole world looks to the sky for rain, all subjects look to the king for a just rule (kural – 542).” According to Valluvar, it is the responsibility of the king to acquire, store, protect and distribute the wealth (kural – 385).” Valluvar clearly states, “All human beings are equal by birth (kural – 972).” Therefore, it is the government’s responsibility to have appropriate laws and enforce them so that people are protected against societal inequalities and discriminations. So, it is the responsibility of the ruler (or the government) to protect the people from poverty resulting from institutional, natural, and societal causes.

Causes and Effects of Poverty are Intertwined

Although the responsibilities for the various causes of poverty are clear, the situations may be more complicated in real life. For example, a man with a low level of education may experience poverty. Poverty may prevent him from pursuing further education and prevent him from providing higher education to his children. So, a low level of education causes poverty, and poverty in turn leads to low levels of education in the family. Similarly, the causes and effects of poverty from the institutional causes may also be inseparable. If a country is poor, it may not have good

infrastructure. For example, the roads and bridges may be in poor condition needing repairs. If the infrastructure is not good, commerce and industry in that country will not flourish. When commerce and industry are affected, the country will have more unemployment and reduced national income. Lower national income will lead to more poverty. Thus, poverty causes poor infrastructure and in turn poor infrastructure causes poverty So, what is the solution?

External Intervention is Necessary

In exceptional cases, an individual can extricate himself out of poverty by sheer discipline and hard work. So also, in some cases a country can get out of poverty through good leadership and dedicated hard work of the citizens. In most cases, an individual as well as a nation may need external help to rise above poverty. For example, a poor man with a low level of education needs help from an external source to continue his education. Even a young man with good education and enthusiasm, eager and willing to work will be poor if he lacks employment opportunities. He needs external intervention to get out of poverty. That external source can be the government or an employer. So also, a nation with poor infrastructure needs financial help from another nation or from an organization like the World Bank. So, a poor man or a poor nation may need external help to get out of poverty.

Charity and Philanthropy

The external intervention can be in the form of charity or philanthropy. Charity and philanthropy are different. Charity is a natural, emotional impulse to an immediate situation, and giving usually occurs in the short term. Philanthropy addresses the root causes of social issues and requires a more strategic, long-term approach. In the context of Thirukkural, charity is giving food or giving a person what he needs when the individual comes and asks for food or help. Whereas philanthropy is realizing the need of poor people and fulfilling them without anyone explicitly asking for anything.

Valluvar says that “The removal of the fatal hunger of the destitute is the right place to deposit one’s wealth (kural – 226).” In another kural, he says that even if heaven is denied to you,

it is better to help the poor through charity. He is of the strong opinion that there is nothing crueler than not being able to help the poor. According to him, there is nothing more worthwhile than being recognized for charity to the poor (kural – 231). In these cases, someone is hungry and asks for food, and he is given food. These kurals are in support of charity.

In kural 212, Valluvar recommends philanthropy when he says, “All the wealth gained through hard work is for doing service to the deserving people.” In kural 211, he says, “Rain does not expect anything in return. Similarly, duty to society demands nothing in return.” In these cases, a person realizes that everyone is alike and has compassion for the poor person. Help is offered to the needy person without being asked. That is philanthropy.

The same applies in the case of nations. Wealthy nations, large foundations, or an organization like the World Bank should help a poor country to get out of poverty. So, in general, elimination of poverty in the world is the joint responsibility of the individuals, the governments, and the society.

The second major problem – Diseases

We just saw Valluvar’s solutions for solving the problem of poverty. Just like poverty, diseases also have been a problem for the world for a very long time.

Valluvar’s Solution for eliminating Diseases

Basic Instructions for Good Health

As in the case of poverty, an individual has certain responsibilities, and the government and the society have certain responsibilities to maintain public health. Individuals should do everything they can to maintain good health. In this regard, Valluvar has a few simple instructions. For example, he says that one should eat only after digesting what has already been eaten (kural – 942). Also, one should eat agreeable food in moderation to ensure good health (kural – 945). Although these instructions are very useful, they may not help to cure the numerous diseases that afflict people.

Emphasis on Precaution

Valluvar has a piece of general advice that is applicable to all situations. He says, “No terrifying calamity will happen to the wise who foresee and guard against potential evils (kural 429).” In a different context, he says, “The life of a man who does not guard against potential problems will be like a haystack before an advancing fire (kural – 435). But this kural is also relevant here.

Valluvar emphasizes precaution as a major weapon to protect ourselves from the onslaught of diseases. In other words, the individuals should take adequate precautions by way of exercise, diet control, moderation in food, having medical checkups as required, heeding to the advice of the physicians, and taking all the necessary precautions one can. This is particularly applicable in the present context of COVID. One should get vaccinated, maintain social distance, wear a mask, and wash hands often. These are all precautions. One who takes all these precautions may not suffer from COVID. But sometimes, it may not be possible to figure out what precautions to take. For example, certain types of cancers cannot be anticipated or prevented. This is where intervention by doctors and healthcare workers may be necessary.

Government's Responsibility

In addition to the individuals taking preventive measures, the government is also responsible for making sure the people do not suffer from serious diseases. Valluvar stresses the importance of good health of the citizens as an essential aspect of good governance. He says that good health of the citizens, the country's wealth, plenty of yield, happiness, and proper defenses are the five ornaments of a country (kural – 738). He adds that an ideal country is one where people are free from starvation and epidemics and the country is not harassed by enemies (kural – 734). In both these kurals, Valluvar is emphasizing the importance good health of the citizens. Therefore, according to Valluvar, it is the government's responsibility to ensure that the people enjoy good health. These days, it will mean affordable healthcare, medical facilities, clean water, good sanitation, and encouraging medical research to develop innovative cures for diseases.

Society's Responsibility

In addition to individuals taking appropriate steps to protect themselves and the government helping the people, Valluvar emphasizes the role of everyone in the society to help the people who suffer from diseases. He questions by asking, "What benefit does someone derive from his intelligence if he does not treat others' suffering as his own (kural – 315)?" Obviously, every individual has some level of intelligence and is therefore capable of empathizing with those suffering from health issues. Thus, the society also has a responsibility to help people to maintain good health. In particular, the doctors and the healthcare workers have a responsibility to have empathy and compassion for their patients.

Just as in the case of poverty, preventing diseases and curing people when they suffer from illnesses is the joint responsibility of the individuals, the government, and the society.

The Third Major Problem - Violence

Valluvar's Solution for Preventing Violence

Just like poverty and diseases, violent conflicts have also been common throughout the world since the time of Adam and Eve. The biblical Book of Genesis mentions that Cain, one of the sons of Adam and Eve was jealous of his brother Abel and killed him. There is evidence of violent interpersonal conflicts during pre-historic periods. Violent conflicts continue even today throughout the world. Sometimes the conflicts involve few people and in other times there are violent conflicts between two or more groups of people and wars involving two or more countries. For example, according to the World Health Organization's World Report on Violence and Health (Released in 2000), the 20th century was one of the most violent periods in human history, and during that period, an estimated 191 million people lost their lives directly or indirectly because of armed conflicts. In the year 2000, about 310 000 people died as a direct result of conflict-related injuries. So, it is a fact that violent behavior has been prevalent throughout human history.

What Is Violence?

WHO's World Report on Violence and Health defines Violence as follows: Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

Valluvar's Definition of Violence

Valluvar has a simpler definition of violence. In the Chapter on "Not Causing Harm", he says.

What one has realized as causing pain to oneself, one should not inflict on others.

(kural - 316)

This means that one should avoid doing things to others those things he finds harmful if they are done to him. This then includes physical as well psychological harm to others. If an individual is hurt when somebody uses harsh words towards him, he should not use harsh words towards others. Everyone feels the pain when someone causes physical injury to him and therefore, he should not cause physical injuries to others. This is very similar to Confucius' Golden Rule which states, "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you."

What is Valluvar's Solution for the Problem of Violence?

Valluvar's target audience is always the individual. His ethical guidelines for life are aimed towards individuals. He always talks about how an individual should behave under different circumstances. Consistent with his view on individual responsibility, he insists that one should avoid doing physical as well as psychological harm to others. First, he appeals to his readers' intellect by asking, "What is the use of a man's intelligence if he does not treat the sufferings of others as his own? (kural – 315)". If one feels the sufferings of others, then he would not hurt other people. He cautions, "Even vengeance on those who cause unprovoked harm will bring endless evil (kural – 313)". He mentions that "It is the code of the people who are pure at heart not to hurt

others even when they do harm in anger (kural – 312).” Valluvar is totally against hurting others under any circumstance. He is convinced that, “It is the cardinal virtue not to do any harm to anyone at any time in any measure even in thought (kural – 317).” In other words, his advice is one of tolerance of all harm done by others and not doing any harm to anyone in any measure at any time.

Doing Good for Evil

Valluvar sets a high goal for his readers by saying, “The best punishment for those who do evil to you is to shame them by returning good for evil (kural – 314).” This idea of Valluvar is even better than the one in the Golden Rule attributed to Confucius. So, it is appropriate to call this idea as the “Platinum Rule” of Valluvar. One may question the practicality of this noble goal. But Mahatma Gandhi has demonstrated that it is certainly possible to follow Valluvar’s advice of doing good for evil.

Mahatma Gandhi’s Example

When Mahatma Gandhi was in South Africa fighting for the rights of Indians, he was sentenced to jail several times by General Smuts. But Gandhi’s protest was always non-violent. Mahatma Gandhi had no ill feelings towards General Smuts. When in prison, Gandhi had learnt to make sandals. Just before he left South Africa, he gifted the pair of sandals he made to General Smuts. General Smuts wore those sandals for many years. But he always felt guilty wearing those sandals. During Gandhi’s seventieth birthday celebrations, the General returned the pair of sandals with a note stating that he did not deserve to wear them. Those sandals are in Gandhi Museum in Mumbai, India.

Mahatma Gandhi used non-violence as a tool to fight against the British government in the struggle for India’s independence. Later the concept was adopted by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his struggle against the government of USA to obtain Civil Rights for the African Americans. Subsequently, Nelson Mandela also used non-violent methods to end apartheid and to establish a Democratic government in South Africa.

Valluvar's solution to end violence at the individual, social and political levels has produced positive results and it is worth promoting that as the approach to end violence. After all, the origin of violence is in the minds of people. If people can eliminate the idea of hurting others from their minds, then there will be no more violence. The Preamble to [the Constitution of UNESCO](#) declares that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed". This is exactly the approach recommended by Valluvar.

The Fourth Major Problem - Environmental Degradation

What is Environmental Degradation?

Environmental degradation is the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as quality of air, water, and soil; the destruction of ecosystems; habitat destruction; the extinction of wildlife; and pollution. In other words, it refers to any change or disturbance to the environment perceived to be deleterious or undesirable.

Environmental Degradation is a Relatively New Problem

Over the past several centuries, human beings have come up with many innovations. Agriculture, mining, manufacturing, transportation, and communications are some of the sectors in which we have made phenomenal progress. While the innovations and progress in these areas have produced several benefits, they have also contributed to environmental degradation. When the human society changed from a hunter–gatherer society to an agricultural society, the result was deforestation and loss of biodiversity. After the industrial revolution of the 18th century, major changes in manufacturing started, and that resulted in increased use of coal as the primary source of energy. With the advent of automobiles and airplanes in the twentieth century, the use of other forms of fossil energy such as oil and natural gas has become more ubiquitous. That has led to land degradation, water pollution, toxic air pollution, and global warming. No doubt, the innovations are extremely beneficial. But they also have detrimental consequences.

Valluvar's Stance on Environmental Degradation

Loss of biodiversity: During Valluvar's days, there was no serious concern regarding the environmental degradation. However, he recognized the need for protecting all life forms in this

world. He has dedicated a chapter on “non – killing” where he emphasizes the virtue of not killing any living being. With that goal in mind, he says,

According to all the books in the world, sharing our food with all the creatures of the world and protecting them is the most important virtue.

(kural – 322)

Human beings have been a constant threat to the continued survival of many life forms. According to Prof. Yuval Noah Harari, the author of the book, “*Sapiens - A Brief History of Humankind*”, urbanization and agriculture have resulted in the loss of habitat for many species of animals. Our actions have contributed to the loss of biodiversity. So, if we pay attention to Valluvar’s remarks regarding sharing our food and protecting all the animals, we may be able to achieve United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goal 15 which aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation.

Scarcity of water: There is a growing shortage of water in the world. Over 2 billion people in the world lack access to water that is free of health risks. The [United Nations](#) has determined that access to clean water and sanitation facilities is a [basic human right](#). Sustainable Development Goal 6 is designed to "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all." Valluvar is in total agreement with the objective of this goal. He asserts that water is essential to sustain life on earth. He says,

Life cannot exist without water in this world. Similarly, virtue cannot exist without rain.

(kural - 20)

Not only that the water should be available, but the available water should also be clean.

In a different context, Valluvar says that forests are a highly desirable fortification for a country. It can also be interpreted that since forests contribute to rainfall, which is an essential source of

water, forests offer protection for the people in a country, and therefore deforestation should be avoided.

Valluvar's Warning

In this regard, Valluvar has a kural which sounds like a warning to human beings. He says that although we know how to do new things, we must ensure they are consistent with nature. Anything that is against nature will have adverse consequences. The kural is as follows:

Though you are acquainted with theoretical methods of performing an act, make sure that it is in tune with nature. (kural – 637)

Valluvar could not have known or anticipated the environmental problems the world is facing today. But amazingly, the kural is valid in the present context where the world is confronted with the problem environmental deterioration.

In this context, there is also another kural that is also worth paying attention. Valluvar stresses the importance of prevention and planning to avoid disasters.

The life of a man who does not guard against potential problems will be destroyed like a haystack before an advancing fire. (kural – 435)

Here we see Valluvar's prophetic wisdom advising us on the need to take preventive measures against any possible catastrophe. Scientists have been warning the world about the dangers of environmental degradation. Based on their advice, the leaders at the United Nations had recognized the dangers of environmental degradation and have come up with Sustainable Development Goals designed to protect the world from such threats. This is precisely the approach recommended by Valluvar.

Conclusion

We looked at four major problems facing the world: poverty, diseases, violence, and environmental degradation. Valluvar's proposed solution for the elimination of poverty is for the government and the affluent people to help the poor with love and compassion through charity and philanthropy without expecting anything in return. The solution for the elimination of diseases involves compassionate governance by the rulers and love for fellow human beings by the care givers and the society. The solution for the problem of violence is through tolerance and love. Where there is love, there will be no violence. The solution for the problem of environmental degradation underscores the need for love of all forms of life, present and the future. So, we see that love is the common factor in the solutions for all the four major problems.

Are human beings capable of such love? Valluvar is convinced that all human beings are endowed with the capacity to show and act with love towards all living beings. He says,

Love is the quintessence of life; without it, a man is nothing, but a frame of bones covered with skin. (kural – 80)

As the American poet Anthony Liccione says, "With love everything is possible" Or as John Lennon of the Beatles quartet says, "All you need is love".

In conclusion, Valluvar is a philosopher for all ages and for all people. As G. U. Pope says, he is the bard of universal man. His book is immortal. His philosophy is secular. He believes in the equality of all people. His approach is rational. His focus is life on earth. His philosophy is based on life and world affirmation. His message is one of truth, non-violence, love, and compassion towards all living beings of the world. The world will be immensely benefitted by his ageless wisdom. Therefore, it is our duty to spread his message throughout the world and inculcate the younger generation with Valluvar's wisdom to make this world a better place.

Appendix - A

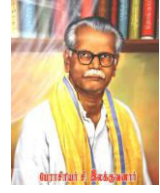
- நீர்இன்று அமையாது உலகெனின் யார்யார்க்கும்
வான்இன்று அமையாது ஒழுக்கு. (kural - 20)
- அன்பின் வழியது உயிர்நிலை அஃதிலார்க்கு
என்புதோல் போர்த்த உடம்பு. (kural - 80)
- கைம்மாறு வேண்டா கடப்பாடு மாரிமாட்டு
என் ஆற்றுங் கொல்லோ உலகு. (kural - 211)
- தாளாற்றித் தந்த பொருளெல்லாம் தக்கார்க்கு
வேளாண்மை செய்தற் பொருட்டு. (kural - 212)
- அற்றார் அழிபசி தீர்த்தல் அஃதொருவன்
பெற்றான் பொருள்வைப் புழி. (kural - 226)
- ஈதல் இசைபட வாழ்தல் அதுவல்லது
ஊதியம் இல்லை உயிர்க்கு. (kural - 231)
- செய்யாமல் செற்றார்க்கும் இன்னாத செய்தபின்
உய்யா விழுமந் தரும். (kural - 313)
- இன்னாசெய் தாரை ஒறுத்தல் அவர்நாண
நன்னயஞ் செய்து விடல். (kural - 314)
- அறிவினான் ஆகுவ துண்டோ பிறிதின்றோய்
தந்நோய்போல் போற்றாக் கடை. (kural - 315)
- இன்னா எனத்தான் உணர்ந்தவை துன்னாமை
வேண்டும் பிறன்கண் செயல். (kural - 316)
- எனைத்தானும் எஞ்ஞான்றும் யார்க்கும் மனத்தானாம்
மாணாசெய் யாமை தலை. (kural - 317)
- பகுத்துண்டு பல்லுயிர் ஓம்புதல் நூலோர்
தொகுத்தவற்றுள் எல்லாந் தலை. (kural - 322)
- இயற்றலும் ஈட்டலுங் காத்தலும் காத்த
வகுத்தலும் வல்ல தரசு. (kural - 385)
- கேடில் விழுச்செல்வம் கல்வி யொருவற்கு
மாடல்ல மற்றை யவை. (kural - 400)
- விலங்கொடு மக்கள் அனையர் இலங்குநூல்
கற்றாரோடு ஏனை யவர். (kural - 410)
- வருமுன்னர்க் காவாதான் வாழ்க்கை எரிமுன்னர்
வைத்தாறு போலக் கெடும். (kural - 435)
- வானோக்கி வாழும் உலகெல்லாம் மன்னவன்
கோல் நோக்கி வாழுங் குடி. (kural - 542)
- குடிபுறங் காத்தோம்பிக் குற்றம் கடிதல்
வடுவன்று வேந்தன் தொழில். (kural - 549)

- உடையர் எனப்படுவது ஊக்கம் அஃ தில்லார்
உடையது உடையரோ மற்று. (kural - 591)
- குடிமடிந்து குற்றம் பெருகும் மடிமடிந்து
மாண்ட உஞற்றி லவர்க்கு. (kural - 604)
- முயற்சி திருவினை ஆக்கும் முயற்றின்மை
இன்மை புகுத்தி விடும். (kural - 616)
- செயற்கை அறிந்தக் கடைத்தும் உலகத்து
இயற்கை அறிந்து செயல். (kural - 637)
- உறுபசியும் ஓவாப் பிணியும் செறுபகையும்
சேரா தியல்வது நாடு. (kural - 734)
- பிணியின்மை செல்வம் விளைவின்பம் ஏமம்
அணியென்ப நாட்டிவ் வைந்து. (kural - 738)
- மருந்தென வேண்டாவாம் யாக்கைக்கு அருந்தியது
அற்றது போற்றி உணின். (kural - 942)
- மாறுபாடு இல்லாத உண்டி மறுத்துண்ணின்
ஊறுபாடு இல்லை உயிர்க்கு. (kural - 945)
- பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும் சிறப்பொவ்வா
செய்தொழில் வேற்றுமை யான். (kural - 972)
- இன்மையின் இன்னாதது யாதெனின் இன்மையின்
இன்மையே இன்னா தது. (kural - 1041)
- இன்மை எனவொரு பாவி மறுமையும்
இம்மையும் இன்றி வரும். (kural - 1042)
- தொல்வரவும் தோலும் கெடுக்கும் தொகையாக
நல்குரவு என்னும் நசை. (kural - 1043)
- நல்குரவு என்னும் இடும்பையுள் பல்குரைத்
துன்பங்கள் சென்று படும். (kural - 1045)
- நற்பொருள் நன்குணர்ந்து சொல்லினும் நல்கூர்ந்தார்
சொற்பொருள் சோர்வு படும். (kural - 1046)
- அறஞ்சாரா நல்குரவு ஈன்றதா யானும்
பிறன்போல நோக்கப் படும். (kural - 1047)
- நெருப்பினுள் துஞ்சலும் ஆகும் நிரப்பினுள்
யாதொன்றும் கண்பாடு அரிது. (kural - 1049)



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Dr. Alka Jain

Professor, Taxila Business School

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Professor Dr.Alka Jain-A multitalented genius

Dr. Alka Jain is an academician having an experience of more than 23 years in corporate and academic areas. Her specialization field is marketing and HR and a special area of interest is Business ethics. She has taught the following subjects with great interest:

Her academic experience in northern and southern part of the country familiarizes students with cases from both the economies of the country. Currently she is a Professor at Taxila Business School. Her specialization field is marketing and Human Resource and special area of interest is business ethics. Jainism has been the root of most of her ethics related researches while ancient Jain and Hindu literature serves as a platform for her efforts to familiarize the world with ancient Indian management systems.

She is a Research guide for Commerce (Approved by University of Mysore), Four Ph D students under her guidance presently.

Her contribution includes:

*Subject matter expert articles/book review on management and Jainism in various books, magazines and websites.

*Large number of research paper publications in national and international journals (List available in the publications link)

*Presentations of research papers in various national (26) and international (18) conferences have evoked fruitful discussions amongst the group of eminent scholars.

*Best research paper prize awarded for the research paper titled 'Internal marketing in Indian Service Sector' in the international conference organized by Research Development Association and Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce.

She has five (3 ISBN+2) books to her credit.

The learned Prof.Dr. Alka Jain, a multitalented academician, has also conducted theatre workshops for Jain community artists for ten years continuously as a social service. She was trained by theatre artists Rati Bartholomew, Ravi Sharma and Tripurari Sharma (Director, National School of Drama).

Willing to benefit the society and economy with her dual experience of corporate and academic fields, she is contributing a lot to the institution as well as to the society; we wish her many laurels and accolades she deserves for her remarkable contribution and outstanding scholarship.

Her essay **"SWOT Analysis in Thirukkural: Comparative Analysis with Humphrey SWOT Matrix"** is an innovative attempt to analyse Thirukkural in a modern perspective.

Our founder, Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar, was longing for such modernist perspectives like this, for the analysis of Thirukkural. On one hand, it will prove the modern relevance and on the side it will throw new light to demonstrate Thirukkural as a vast encyclopedia and a treasure-trove of knowledge useful for the entire mankind.

What is a SWOT Analysis?

A SWOT analysis is an incredibly simple, yet powerful tool to help you develop your business strategy, whether you're building a startup or guiding an existing company.

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal to your company—things that you have some control over and can change. Examples include who is on your team, your patents and intellectual property, and your location.

Opportunities and threats are external—things that are going on outside your company, in the larger market. You can take advantage of opportunities and protect against threats, but you can't change them. Examples include competitors, prices of raw materials, and customer shopping trends.

A SWOT analysis organizes your top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats into an organized list .

SWOT Analysis in Thirukkural: Comparative Analysis with Humphrey SWOT Matrix

--Dr. Alka Jain

Abstract: Modern SWOT analysis was explained first (not originated) by Albert Humphrey in the 1960 and 70s using data from Fortune 500 companies, when he led a convention at the Stanford Research Institute. Thirukkural SWOT model is an ancient model developed on the basis of observations of the composer almost 2000 years ago. Thirukkural, the pancham veda (Fifth sacred book) of Tamilians is being looked at as a management handbook in this study. It has been analysed whether the book gives us an exact model of SWOT (Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for an entrepreneur. The observations and readings lead to a more detailed SWOT model in Thirukkural. There are terms which are explained through a set of many verses. For example opportunity scanning has been explained in the chapter 49. The model is rediscovered in the chapters 47,48 and 49. The researcher has compiled the verses at one place in this paper to visualize a complete SWOT model which can act as a guiding path for an entrepreneur. In depth study of Thirukkural has made it possible. Further , usage of this model in modern businesses and new ventures has been discussed . Such studies may prove useful in handing over the knowledge of our ancestors to the future generations and make use of it in their business ventures. This way we can prove that western world is not the only promoter of management theories. India has also contributed in giving us prosperous and sophisticated economies. Gita, Thirukkural, Ramayana and Mahabharata are the eloquent testimonies of this statement. The research paper is just a step towards this goal. To quote Wikipedia would be appropriate here , "Humphrey himself does not claim the creation of SWOT, and the origin remains obscure."Isn't there a possibility that he came across this great book (Translated in English) and discovered SWOT model, then it was translated by him into SWOT matrix for the use of modern entrepreneurs.

I. Purpose

SWOT analysis is important for both organizations and employees. It helps one in making an assessment based on understanding of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The proposed study attempts to rediscover management concepts from Thirukkural – a book written in 30 B.C. – more than 2000 years ago from today. Focus of this paper is to analyse if SWOT approach of analyzing strengths and

weaknesses and scanning of opportunities and threats was considered important in that ancient era business also. SWOT is believed to be a very modern approach given to us by western management scholars. But this research may prove that these concepts used to exist almost two thousand years ago in ancient India and their importance was well known and practiced by management practitioners of that era.

Research Questions

1. Does Thirukkural have a model that covers Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threat analysis for an entrepreneur?
2. Is the model from Thirukkural complete and relevant in modern business world?
3. Is there any new lead from Thirukkural which can be taken forward?

II. Research Methodology

Thirukkural was studied to with a focus on finding management concepts in this great book. Exactness of this model was checked by analyzing it comparatively with the modern approach of SWOT analysis. Other details in the book Thirukkural were summarized to draw a complete model to suit the needs of modern business organizations. **Thirukkural: An Introduction**

Thirukkural is an ancient piece of Tamil Jain literature. According to some historians it was written around 30 B.C. The book is divided into 133 chapters , each chapter is a collection of beautiful verses. Historians do not have a single view on authorship of Thirukkural, few believe that it was written by Elacharya, *SWOT Analysis in Thirukkural: Comparative Analysis with Humphrey SWOT Matrix* DOI: 10.9790/487X-17123134 www.iosrjournals.org 32 | Page

a few by Kundkundacharya. But in South Jain community the book is respected a pious “Jain grantha”. The book is a guide to the reader’s social and spiritual upgradation. The poet has composed the verses in such a manner that the philosophy of life is reflected in simple language.

III. What is SWOT Analysis ?

“A SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or in a business venture.” (Wikipedia.org). It is a useful strategic tool that helps in evaluating strengths and weaknesses of a person/organization. It also helps in scanning the opportunities that an entrepreneur may avail and also foresee the threats he may have to face. Strengths and weaknesses act as internal factors whereas opportunities and threats act as external factors of an organization in this analysis. It is better understood through graphical representation called SWOT Matrix as shown in the diagram below:

IV. Comparative Analysis of Modern SWOT and Thirukkural SWOT Model

1. Thirukkural model can be generalized for social, spiritual and other platforms of life also where one comes across a decision making situation, while modern SWOT analysis is restricted towards business ventures only. Ryan Goodrich’s statement is worth quoting here, he says that, “A SWOT analysis is commonly used in marketing and business in general as a method of identifying opposition for new venture or strategy. This allows professionals to identify all of the positive and negative elements that may affect any new proposed action.”
2. **Origin:** of modern SWOT analysis was explained first (not originated) by Albert Humphrey in the 1960 and 70s using data from Fortune 500 companies. On the other hand Thirukkural model is an ancient model developed on the basis of observations of the composer almost 2000 years ago.
3. **Criticism:** Heinz Weirich has criticized Humphrey’s SWOT matrix. He says that some users found it difficult to translate the results of the SWOT analysis into meaningful actions that could be adapted within the wider corporate strategy .Thirukkural model starts from those meaningful actions and removes all doubts and confusions of the user. Nikki Pfeiffer also opines that many small business owners do not know how to properly use a SWOT analysis to guide their business, whereas Thirukkural SWOT model accomplishes this in four straight forward steps that a lay person can also understand. These steps have been discussed above.

4. Improvements in modern SWOT Matrix have been made by western management scholars like Heinz Weirich in the form of TWOS Matrix (www.usfca.edu/fac_staff/Weihrich/docs/tows.pdf) .On the other hand SWOT model of Thirukkural was lying unattended for a long time and if some work is in progress on the same , it is not known much.

5. Modern SWOT is a part of overall strategic plan where as Thirukkural explains it with a proper beginning and end highlighting what is the most powerful resource of an entrepreneur.

SWOT Matrix	Internal Weaknesses
(Humphrey) Internal Strengths (Positive attributes)	(Negative attributes)
External Opportunities (Favorable changes/activities in external environment)	External Threats (Unfavorable changes/activities in external environment)

Chapter 47 and 48 of Thirukkural explain SWOT analysis. The very first verse of Chapter 47 says,” What is the cost of this project, what is expected profit,what all losses I may have to bear - as an entrepreneur one must think on all these aspects and then act wisely.” (அழிவதூஉம் ஆவதூஉம் ஆகி வழிபயக்கும் ஊதியமும் சூழ்ந்து செயல்) First verse of chapter 48 says, “ When you start a task, look upon/think of all the obstacles, you may have to face in accomplishing it . After this evaluate your strength, your competitors” strengths and the competitor”s supporters strengths. Only then you should start a sk.” (வினைவலியும் தன்வலியும் மாற்றான் வலியும் துணைவலியும் தூக்கிச் செயல்) Verse eight of this chapter displays a model of inflow and outflow in an organization: If the drainage pipe into which the water is flowing in is shallow, you need

not worry, but make sure that the drainage pipe to flow this water out should not be too deep n large.” (ஆகாறு அளவிட்டிதாயினுங் கேடில்லை போகாறு அகலாக் கடை)The whole chapter 49 is devoted to opportunity scanning. The readers should not be surprised if they come across exact terminology (of course after translation) used in modern business management world. The whole chapter 49 is devoted to opportunity scanning by the name ‘Knowing the fitting time’.We shall focus on verse four of this chapter which completes the listing of all four elements of modern SWOT Analysis – Strengths ,Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The verse says,

[“ஞாலம் கருதினும் கைகூடும் காலம் கருதி இடத்தாற் செயின் “] Meaning “If you select proper resources to avail opportunities in hand then you can win the whole world.” If we compile the set of these four verses, we get an exact SWOT model for an entrepreneur. Let us analyse the terms used in this translation: Task – Enterprise, new production unit, new department, product , a new task in hand etc. **Strengths – வலிமை: தன் வலி,மாற்றான் வலிமை,துணை வலி-** The composer of these verses advises an entrepreneur to analyse the strengths at three levels: a) Your own strength : Such strengths may consist of size, growth, share, position, profitability , margins and technology positions. b) Competitor’s strength : This can be translated into questions like „Who are your competitors?, What are the strengths of your competitors?, what are their planning methods and How do we compete? This way an entrepreneur can analyse his competitive position and and their stages of product evolution can be plotted fro future planning of strategies. c) Competitor’s supporters’ strengths **Weaknesses :** Unavailability of raw materials suppliers, no transportation, poor infrastructure are a few examples of weak business environment. This element also throws light on where you need to improve or what should be avoided from inclusion in your strategic planning etc. **Opportunities -** In modern business world this term may mean good opportunities for your enterprise, favorable changes in government policies,technological advancements

which may help you in better controlling and communication. At times changes noticed in social patterns and lifestyle changes also may act as opportunity. Occasional events may also be taken up as opportunities. **Threats** – Thirukkural has given us a similar term to threat “obstacle.” These threats may be in terms of quality standards, technological instruments which have entered the market and may increase the cost of production after being purchased, changes in specifications of customer’s recruiter’s requirements etc. This may also include cash flow problems which have been discussed in the verses above. At times non removal of weaknesses may also end up in threats. Competitors may also act as threats which has been discussed under the verse explaining ‘வலியறிதல்’ in Thirukkural. **Result** of this analysis is also discussed in each verse so that the entrepreneur is motivated. Thirukkural declares openly that it is the entrepreneur’s strength only that may make him beat all competitions. Live supporting examples of these statements are Narayan Murthy behind WIPRO, Bill Gates behind Microsoft and Steve Jobs behind Apple.

IV. Comparative Analysis of Modern SWOT and Thirukkural SWOT Model

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2. **Origin:** of modern SWOT analysis was explained first (not originated) by Albert Humphrey in the 1960 and 70s using data from Fortune 500 companies. On the other hand Thirukkural model is an ancient model developed on the basis of observations of the composer almost 2000 years ago.

3. **Criticism:** Heinz Weirich has criticized Humphrey's SWOT matrix. He says that some users found it difficult to translate the results of the SWOT analysis into meaningful actions that could be adapted within the wider corporate strategy. Thirukkural model starts from those meaningful actions and removes all doubts and confusions of the user. Nikki Pfeiffer also opines that many small business owners do not know how to properly use a SWOT analysis to guide their business, whereas Thirukkural SWOT model accomplishes this in four straight forward step that a lay person can also understand. These steps have been discussed above.
4. Improvements in modern SWOT Matrix have been made by western management scholars like Heinz Weirich in the form of TWOS Matrix (www.usfca.edu/fac_staff/Weihrich/docs/tows.pdf). On the other hand SWOT model of Thirukkural was lying unattended for a long time and if some work is in progress on the same, it is not known much.
5. Modern SWOT is a part of overall strategic plan where as Thirukkural explains it with a proper beginning and end highlighting what is the most powerful resource of an entrepreneur.
6. Modern SWOT matrix talk about strengths as an internal factor only but Thirukkural model treats this element as an internal as well as external element. This can be seen from the Thirukkural matrix shown above.
7. **Goal determination:** is the first and foremost requirement of both the models. If Thirukkural says „, modern scholars name is “specifying the objective”. It is rationally important to have an achievable goal for an organization.
8. Both the models emphasise on analysis of internal and external factors.
9. Both the models act as a vision towards supportive and unfavourable factors in the internal and external environment. They try to foresee the threats beforehand.
10. Thirukkural verses help in guiding an entrepreneur to turn his threats into oporties whereas modern SWOT endsup in listing them. It leaves it upto the strategy manager to do this job.

V. Limitations

The researcher is not a Tamilian; hence she had to use Sanskrit, Hindi and English translations of the Tamil book for the research purpose. Sole dependence on translations may bring in some additions and may skip some important facts. One more problem with these translations is that all of them vary in the format, some of them have used the chapter format and hence the serial of verses differs from those which have used universal pattern of serial number of verses. This varied pattern may be responsible for variation in numbers while citing.

VI. Conclusion

Rediscovering such ancient business models can be generalized for other spheres of life also. On the other hand social or life models given in Thirukkural may be used for business purposes to move forward to a prosperous economy. This model may help in mapping accurately all the angles for correct evaluation. SWOT model of Thirukkural is a complete analysis model of any problems that an entrepreneur may have to face while starting a new business. On the other side of the balance is an analysis of his strengths. Finding more management models from management treasure „Thirukkural“ may be further scope of study. Or both the models can be integrated to get a collaborative model useful for everyone as they help people in enhancing strengths, minimizing weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and remove threats out of the way.

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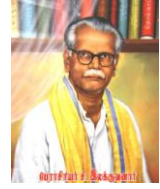
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N.B.: Our contributor Prof.Alka Jain considers Thiruvalluvar as a Jain saint. We are of the firm view that Thiruvalluvar did not associate himself with any particular religion and humanism is the religion spread by his book of universal wisdom. At the same time we are amazed to see how Prof.Alka Jain reveres Thirukkural with high regards and her deep study of Thirukkural through Hindi and Sanskrit translations available to her.



THIRUKKURAL EXPRESS

KuralNeri in English: Founder: Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar



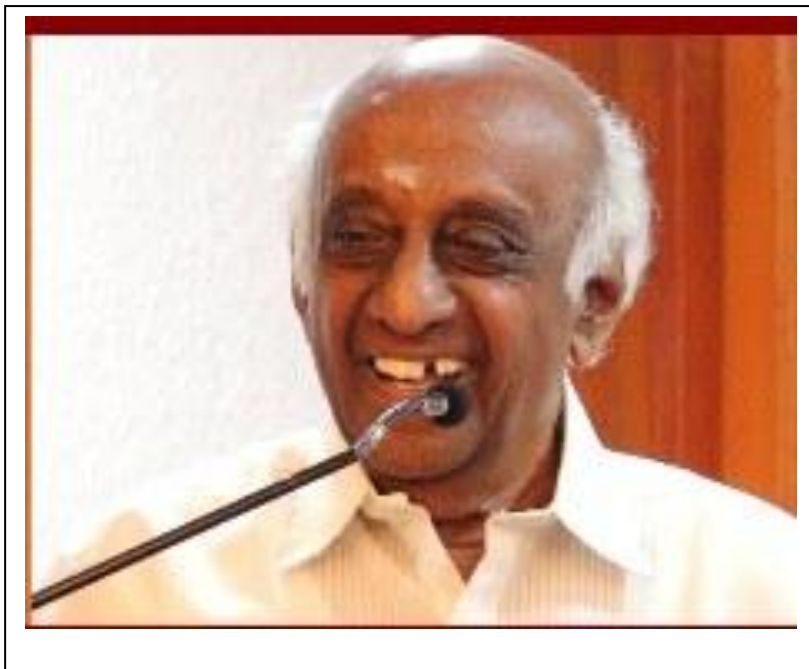
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Prof.K.N.Chitsabesan

Prof.K.N.Chitsabesan

This introductory note for our Honorary Editor and my mentor, Thiru.K.N.Chitsabesan is meant for the younger generations who have no knowledge of the Tamil literary meetings. Every Tamilian aged more than fifty will surely identify and revere the scholar who is popularly known as a silver-tongued orator, through radio and TV always presiding literary debates.

Right from my Pre-university course at Thigarajar College, Madurai during 1962-63 where I had the privilege as a student of this brilliant scholar, I am addicted to his thought-provoking lectures.

Born in a small town Devakottai in the most southern part of Tamilnadu in the year 1934, our Honorary Editor and my mentor, Thiru.K.N.Chitsabesan, had his schooling locally. Even in his early school days, he had cultivated a strong taste for Tamil literature thro' his Tamil veteran teacher Arangakrishnan. Took his B.A. degree thro' Loyola College, Chennai and took his Masters Degree from the University of Madras thro' Presidency College Chennai and secured the Second Rank in the University. Here he had the proud privilege of being the favourite student of Tamil Veterans Dr.Mu.Varadarajanar and The.Po. Meenakshisundaranar. He was appreciated by both of them.

Immediately he joined Thigarajar College, Madurai, as Lecturer in Tamil. He had the fine opportunity of serving with the Tamil stalwarts like Dr. Ilakkuvanar, Dr.A.Chidambaranatha Chettiar, Dr.Maa. Rajamanickananar, Avvai Doraisamy Pillai and A.Ki.Paranthamanar. His work was greatly appreciated by all his seniors and admired by all his juniors.

He had cultivated the art of public speaking besides giving lectures in the class rooms. He participated in many Tamil forums and literary debates dearly called Pattimandrams in Tamil. Here he spoke under the chairmanship of great Tamil Scholars like Tamil Kadal Raya.Sockalinganar, KI.Vaa, Jagannathan, Professors Srinivasaraghavan, A.Sa.Gnanasambandan, Thavithiru Kundrakkudi Adigalar. Then in course of time he was elevated as the chairman of these forums.

He also groomed his famous students for these Pattimandrams and seminars. To mention a few of them Padmasri. Solomon Paappiah, Professors Ku.Gnanasambandan, Abdhul Kader, Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar, Mu.Metha, Tha. Rajaram.

His other renowned students who attained heavenly abode are Ka.Kalimuthu former Speaker of Tamilnadu Legislative Assembly, Kavingarkal Naa.Kamarajan, Inkulab, Prof Tha.Ku. Subramanian and to crown them all Dr.Justice AR.Lakshmanan the former Judge of The Supreme Court of India.

He had travelled in and abroad the country for delivering Tamil Speeches and presiding over many Tamil Debates. The countries visited by him are Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, Srilanka, UK, UAE, and the US.

He is known for his comparative quotations of English Literature which practice he feels will only enhance the greatness of Tamil Literature. His other specialty is blending humor in his lectures. He has earned a coveted title "Nagaichuvai Imayam" meaning 'the humorist surpassing mount Everest' from the stalwart of Tamil Religious Discourses Thirumuruga Kirupananada Variar.

He humbly declares that his motto is "Pleasure to all and malice toward none". He proudly declares that he is going strong at the age of 88 only because of his unquivering taste for Tamil literature.

Thirukkural- The incomparable work of ethics

Professor KN.Chitsabesan

The Tamizh race can legitimately claim the topmost position among the races of the world because of the one reason that it has the pride of possessing Thirukkural, The incomparable work of ethics. It has been said that the worthy work is translated into 120 languages. It occupies the second position next only to the Holy Bible, which of course is a religious work.

It is no wonder that it will have a place in the tongues yet to be born and countries unborn. This didactic work is well planned into three major branches. Aram, Porul and Inbam roughly meaning Ethics, Wealth and Pleasure. Normally Indian philosophy divides the human life into four stages Aram. Porul. Inbam and Veedu adding the Moksha as the fourth one. But Thiruvalluvar is absolutely practical in omitting the fourth stage of life 'Moksha' (veedu) because it cannot be attained or even dreamt of attaining. No perception can even comprehend or imagine the nature of veedu. So, the poet Thiruvalluvar rightly omitted the fourth imaginary stage and opted to deal with the absolute real three stages of life Aram, Porul and Inbam.

Even the first Tamil grammarian Tholkappiyar claims that once the center stage Porul is attained the first and the third stages will automatically be obtained. This is not acceptable to Thiruvalluvar. According to him Aram should be the basis of human life. The other two stages of life Porul and Inbam should have Aram as their base. If one has to make Porul it should be achieved on the basis of Aram and so also if Inbam meaning Pleasure should be achieved it should be done on the solid foundation of Aram. According to Thiruvalluvar Aram is the solid foundation upon which the beautiful edifice of human life should be raised.

“சிறப்பு ஈனும் செல்வமும் ஈனும் அறத்தினுங்கு

ஆக்கம் எவனோ உயிர்க்கு” -----குறள் 31

This means

“There is no other thing that adds fame and support to one’s own life than Aram that yields wealth”.

Thiruvalluvar emphasised thus the importance of Aram by saying that it is the prime strength for human life.

“அறத்தான் வருவதே இன்பம் மற்றெல்லாம்
புறத்த புகழும் இல”-----குறள் 39

This means

The real Pleasure called Inbam is the one that is based on ethics or Aram. The rest are out of the purview of Aram bringing ill fame to the doer.

Therefore this main core should be understood clearly before one ventures into the study of Thirukkural- The incomparable work of ethics.

பாரதியார்சொல்வார்:

“நூல்கள் பற்பல கற்பாராம் ஆயினும்

ஆழ்ந்து கிடக்கும் கவியுள்ளம் காண்கிலார்” என்று.

Poet Bharatiyar has said “People read a lot of books of literature but they fail to understand the soul of the poet”.

Let us venture to disprove this statement in the case of Thiruvalluvar by dealing with his chapters and couplets.

Ayurvedic Concepts in Thirukkural

Thirunavukkarasu MS* and Kapoorchand H Government Ayurveda Medical College and Hospital, Kottar, Nagercoil, Tamilnadu, India

Abstract:

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian medicine is applauded all over the world for its application in overcoming the maladies of human race. Many medical and non-medical treatises elaborate on various aspects of Ayurveda, though several texts have caught our attention still there are many, which are yet to be explored. Thirukkural is one such ancient scripture in Tamil literature that has gained so much importance and has seen many translations and commentaries into almost all major languages of the world. This paper is an attempt to discuss various references in couplets of Thirukkural with regard to Medicine i.e., Ayurveda and its similarity between concepts like Causes of the disease, Nutritional disciplines, treatment principles and importance of four pillars in the treatment.

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Keywords: Ayurveda; Thirukkural; Medicine; Couplets

Introduction

Ancient Indian medicine is applauded all over the world for its application in overcoming the maladies of human race. Many medical and non-medical treatises elaborate on various aspects of Ayurveda, though several texts have caught our attention still there are many which are yet to come into limelight. One such poetic masterpiece is 2,200 year old south Indian Dravidian classic “Thirukkural” [1]. Researchers are now slowly gaining foot focusing on the unpublished and unexplored manuscripts, which deals with the basic principles of this science. CCRAS and other such institutions are imparting stress on such research activities. Apart from the classical

Ayurvedic texts, principles of Ayurveda are found in numerous manuscripts written during post Vedic era. A Critical appraisal of one such work “Thirukkural” is being detailed in this article. Thirukkural is one of the ancient scripture in Tamil literature and it is universally accepted and was written by Thiruvalluvar in 2nd century A.D [2]. It is the only Tamil literary work which has gained so much importance and has seen many translations and commentaries into almost all major languages of the world [3]. As Dr. Albert Schweitzer had rightly said “There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find such lofty wisdom” [4]. Thirukkural consists of 133 chapters each containing 10 couplets, collectively to 1330 couplets and were grouped into 3 sections namely Virtue, Wealth and Love. The first part deals with the moral value of human life and has 38 chapters. The second part is on socio economic values of men in a civilized society and has 70 chapters and the third part is on psychological values of life and has 25 chapters. In the second part, the last chapter is dedicated to Medicine (Chapter 95) [5]. The word Ayurveda means Knowledge of Life or Science of Life. Ayurveda is a traditional system of medicine native to India and is in the process of evolving into Integrative medicine. The science originated from Lord Brahma and received by Dhanvantari more than 3000 years ago and is an upaveda (auxiliary knowledge) of Atharvaveda. Golden period of Ayurveda ranges from 800 B.C. to 1000 A.D. The three most important treatises in Ayurveda appeared during this period, they are Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Ashtanga Samgraha. Thirukkural came into existence subsequently i.e., after Ayurveda, as the author had explored certain ideas like Life skills, Education, Politics, Medicine, sexual life, etc., in his work. This paper is an attempt to discuss those various instances referred in couplets with regard to Medicine . To explore the medical related information cited in the manuscript “Thirukkural”.

Materials and Methods:

1. Thirukkural. 2. Available Ayurvedic texts. The materials are compared and summarized on the basis of similar existing theories. Results are based on a qualitative aspect rather than quantitative.

2. Observation and Discussion:

The chapter of Medicine in Thirukkural consists of 10 couplets. Among them the first couplet explains about the causes of diseases. The next consecutive six couplets explain about the maintenance of Health by adopting the right kind of food regimen. Eighth and ninth couplet explains about the method of treatment and the last one explains the importance of four limbs (Chatuspadas) in the treatment of a patient.

Causes of Disease :

In the foremost couplet of kural, Thiruvalluvar says that the excess or deficiency of the three life forces viz Vata, Pitta and Kapha leads to diseases.

*Food and deed, both in excess and deficit, cause disease,
induced by the three (humors)* listed by the learned, starting with wind.*

மிகினும் குறையினும் நோய்செய்யும் நூலோர்
வளிமுதலா எண்ணிய மூன்று. 941

Similarly Ayurveda categorizes three basic types of functional principles (Doshas) namely Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These principles are essential for basic function of human body. Vata is essential for movement, Pitta for digestion and Kapha for Stability. Imbalance of these principles causes disease. The references pertaining to the causes for increase and decrease of these three functional principles are also available [6].

Nutritional Discipline:

Valluvar has explained and given more importance to dietetic regimen for maintaining health in six couplets. Second couplet says that the one who takes the food after digestion of previous food will never suffer illness. Third couplet mentions that one who wishes long life should take diet in moderate quantity after being assured of digestion of the previous meal. In the next couplet, the person should take compatible diet only when he is hungry. Fifth couplet says that one who is interested in healthy life should take suitable diet in proper quantity. Sixth couplet explains that the disease will occur if food is taken in excess quantity [4,5]. Seventh couplet says that one who takes large quantity of food beyond the capacity of digestive fire suffers from various diseases.

*The body needs no medicine,
if one eats after ensuring the earlier intake is digested.*

மருந்தென வேண்டாவாம் யாக்கைக் கருந்திய
தற்றது போற்றி உணின். 942

*After digestion, eat in right measure. This is the way
for the possessor of the body to prolong its being.*

அற்றால் அளவறிந் துண்க அஃதுடம்பு
பெற்றான் நெடிதுய்க்கு மாறு. 943

*After ascertaining digestion, when you feel quite hungry,
eat, in right measure, food that suits your constitution.*

அற்ற தறிந்து கடைப்பிடித்து மாறல்ல
துய்க்க துவரப் பசித்து.

944

*If one eats after refusing incompatible food
there is no harm for their existence.*

மாறுபா டில்லாத உண்டி மறுத்துண்ணின்
ஊறுபா டில்லை உயிர்க்கு.

945

*Joy resides with one who knows what not and how much to eat.
Likewise, disease rests with the glutton.*

இழிவறிந் துண்பான்கண் இன்பம்போல் நிற்கும்
கழிபேர் இரையான்கண் நோய்.

946

*One who cannot judge his extent of hunger and gobbles up greedily
will be afflicted with boundless malady.*

தீயள வன்றித் தெரியான் பெரிதுண்ணின்
நோயள வின்றிப் படும்.

947

In Ayurveda, Ahara (Diet/Food) is one among the three pillars/ supports of life i.e., trayopasthambha. The three supports of life are intake of food, sleep and observance of brahmacharya; supported by these three well regulated factors of life, the body is endowed with strength, complexion and growth [7]. Ayurveda aims to maintain health. Health as well as disease is dependent on various factors, among which Diet is the most important one. Hence, Ayurveda emphasizes on the diet and dietetic regimen, as diet is the cause of health as well as diseases. And also Acharya's have explained clinical features of a disease and its management based upon the properties and actions of diet and its regimen which was prevalent during that period [8]. Diet may be healthy or unhealthy. A healthy diet depends upon the variation in quantity, time of consumption, method of preparation, habitat and constitution of body, disease

and the age of an individual. Even though a person is taking healthy diet, the amount of diet should not disturb the equilibrium of Doshas and Dhatus of the body, gets digested as well as metabolized in proper time is to be regarded as the proper quantity of food. Acharyas have also explained the signs and symptoms of the intake of food in proper quantity, i.e. the diet should not create pressure in the stomach and flanks, no obstruction to the function of heart, no heaviness in the abdomen, there should be proper nourishment of the senses, relief in hunger and thirst, feeling of comfort in regular work like standing, sitting, sleeping, walking, exhaling, inhaling, laughing and talking [9]. Acharyas have explained the concept of Jirna–Ajirna. So, one should take diet after the digestion of previous diet is considered as proper time for diet, which is most important factor for the health. By following the proper diet in proper time, it promotes longevity by motivating the Agni and it opens the channels of circulations, produces Pure belching, enthusiasm, elimination of malas (Urine and Stool) at the proper time, lightness of the body, appearance of hunger and thirst are the symptoms of good digestion [10]. Symptom of proper digestion is specifically mentioned under the dietetics because intake of food before the previous food is digested may aggravate all the three Doshas leading to serious consequences. Healthy individuals as well as the patients should observe the following, even while using food articles which are more wholesome by nature; one should eat food in proper quantity which is hot, unctuous and not contradictory in potency and that too, after the digestion of the previous meal. Food should be taken in proper place equipped with all the accessories, without talking or laughing, with concentration of mind and paying due regard to oneself. Paying due consideration to the quality and time, a self-controlled men should regularly take such useful food and drinks as are conducive to the internal power of digestion, including metabolism like an Ahiitagni (a men who perform Yajna), who takes diet conducive over of digestion being aware of wholesomeness of food and drinks, who resort to meditation of “Brahma” and charity, enjoys bless without any disease during the present as well as future lives [11].

Treatment of Disease:

In the eighth couplet, the physician who needs success in treatment should understand the stage of disease, cause of disease and then treat the disease. The next couplet says the physician who treats by understanding the patient’s strength, nature of the disease and season will succeed in his carrier.

*Diagnose the disease, detect its root cause,
discern its cure and then act aptly.*

நோய்நாடி நோய்முதல் நாடி அதுதணிக்கும்
வாய்நாடி வாய்ப்பச் செயல்.

948

*The learned medic should consider the state of the ailing,
the extent of ailment and the timing, and then treat.*

உற்றான் அளவும் பிணியளவும் காலமும்
கற்றான் கருதிச் செயல்.

949

Hetu (aetiology), Linga (sign and symptoms), Ousadha (drug and therapy) are the three principles of Ayurveda [12]. Without the knowledge of Hetu (cause of a disease) and Linga (sign and symptoms), the implication of Ousadha (drug and therapy) is not possible. In the classics, the Acharyas said that “rogamadou pareekshet tathonantaram aoushadam” it is very essential that before planning any treatment one should have complete knowledge of Desha, kala, Rogibala, Rogabala and Agni. To understand the nature of disease, one should adopt three fold (Trividha pariksha), six fold (Shadvidha pariksha), eight fold (Asta sthana pariksha) and tenfold (Dashavidha pariksha) examinations. To understand the cause and pathogenesis of the diseases, Nidana Panchakas are explained. Examination of patient is conducted for the knowledge of lifespan, degree of strength and intensity of morbidity. Detailed examination of the patient is the initial step for planning suitable/appropriate therapy.

Fourfold of Treatment:

The last couplet says that four pillars namely Physician, Medicine, medical attendant and patient for responsible for prognosis of a disease.

*The ailing, the medic, the medicine and the caregiver
– the treatment encompasses all these four.*

உற்றவன் தீர்ப்பான் மருந்துழைச் செல்வானென்
றப்பானாற் கூற்றே மருந்து.

950

Ayurveda also explains the importance of these four pillars for successful execution of a treatment. They are physician, medicaments, nursing personnel and the patient. The physician is considered as the foremost among them and should possess technical skill, scientific knowledge, purity and dexterity human understanding. Next, comes the drugs and they should possess of high quality, wide application, with high potency and should be available adequately.

Attendant or nursing personnel is the third component of treatment and should have good knowledge of nursing, skilled in their art and be affectionate, clean and resourceful. The fourth component is the patient himself, who should be cooperative, obedient, fearless and able to communicate or describe his ailment. These sixteen qualities are needed for successful treatment [13]. Here within the scope of an article we could discuss only a few things related to the topic, while Valluvar has encapsulated these details in just two lines giving prime importance to treatment; detailed descriptions are available in the classics regarding Cause of the disease, Nutritional discipline, treatment principles and importance of four pillars of treatment. The similarity between Ayurveda and Thirukkural is not only in the concept of medicine, but also with regard to the code and conduct of life, sexual and seasonal regimen etc.

Conclusion: This presentation is a sincere and honest effort to put forth the various references pertaining Ayurveda principles mentioned in one of the well-known Tamil literary classic. We further suggest that this would form a wonderful and invaluable work, if carried out as a research topic which would bring to lime light various aspects, unknown to our present and future generation.

Acknowledgement: I would like to thank my brother Dr. Sundara BR Kasinath, who motivated this topic and also I would like to thank my friend Dr. Sathish. HS; and my student Dr. P Jeeva, who have helped me with valuable suggestions and guidance in this work.

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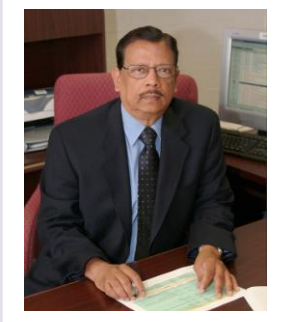
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Thiruvalluvar on Poverty

--Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Bel Air, Maryland, USA



Dr. Prabhakaran was born in Tamil Nadu, India, and migrated to the USA after receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics from Indian universities. Then, he earned his master's and Ph.D. degrees in Computer Science and an MBA degree in Information Management from US universities. In addition to academic positions, he has also held senior-level management positions in private industries. He has been responsible for managing large supercomputing centers at the NASA Research Center and the US Army Research Laboratory in the USA. He is passionate about the Tamil language and literature and has authored books on Puaranaanuuru and Kurunthokai. He has also authored the book "The Ageless Wisdom (As embodied in Thirukkural)," which contains a comparative analysis of Valluvar's ideas with those of modern and ancient scholars and philosophers. He has organized and served as the Coordinator for International Conferences on Thirukkural, Puaranaanuuru, and Kurunthokai. He has delivered several lectures on Thirukkural and Sangam literature-related topics in India and the USA.

What is poverty?

Poverty refers to lacking enough resources to provide the necessities of life such as food, clean water, shelter, clothing, and access to health care, education, and other basic amenities. Judging by this definition, poverty has been a plague upon the society for an awfully long time.

Poverty has Been a Problem for a Long Time

During the Dark Age in Greece (1,100 BC – 750 BC), palaces burned, people left their land and settlements and migrated to new settlements. The Dark Age was the time of worst poverty Greece was ever in, leading to homelessness. Later, in the Classical Period, during the Peloponnesian war, a plague hit Greece, and a third of the population died. Refugees had no water or sanitation, and they were scattered everywhere.

Ancient Roman society was divided into two major classes: the Plebeians (the poor) and the Patricians (the rich). In Ancient Rome, 95% of the citizens lived at or below the poverty level.

Impoverished neighborhoods were crowded, dirty, and highly vulnerable to robbery and murder. The Plebeians lived in extremely unsanitary conditions. Since a large number of people lived in unsanitary conditions, infectious diseases were widespread among the poor. Each year thousands of people died in Rome from contagious diseases. Therefore, the Plebeians lived like the homeless people live today.

Although stratification of the society into classes and castes has been responsible for extreme poverty among the so-called lower classes in ancient India, there was severe poverty in other sections of the society also. Sangam literature documents extreme poverty of some of the Tamil poets and musicians.

In the ancient days, poverty was not limited only to Greece, Rome, and India. There was widespread poverty in all parts of the world. Poverty continued to exist during the Middle Ages, and even today, there is poverty in many countries of the world.

- 85% of the world lives on less than \$30 per day,
- Two-thirds live on less than \$10 per day, and
- 10% of the people live on less than \$1.90 per day.
- . Many millions of people live on much less than \$1.90 per day.

As the economic writer Henry Hazlitt has observed, “The history of poverty is almost the history of mankind.”

Valluvar on Poverty

Valluvar considers that there is nothing that afflicts one like poverty does (Kural¹ – 1041). He adds that when cruel poverty comes on, it destroys the joys of this life and the future (Kural – 1042). He contends that the misery caused by poverty is so severe that one may even sleep in the midst of fire but not in the midst of poverty (Kural – 1049). Here, Valluvar seems to take the poetic license and exaggerates that one can sleep in the midst of the fire. Nobody can really sleep in the midst of fire. But it is indeed impossible to sleep in the midst of poverty. If a man

¹ . Tamil versions of the kurals referenced in this paper are provided in Appendix - A

does not know how he will feed his family tomorrow, how can he sleep tonight? He may not be able to sleep even for a minute.

Valluvar says that the unbearable misery of poverty brings along with it several other undesirable consequences (Kural – 1045). According to Valluvar, the state of poverty will totally destroy the honor and the glory of one's ancestry (Kural – 1043). He adds that poverty will force even men of high birth to the moral weakness of speaking mean words (Kural – 1044). The poor people will not be recognized for their talents. He mentions that though the words of the poor are sound in thought and clear in expression, they will not be heeded by others (Kural – 1046). Finally, Valluvar is of the opinion that even a mother will treat her son as a stranger if his poverty is not associated with virtue (Kural – 1047). These statements by Valluvar reveal that he was fully aware of the misery caused by poverty and the consequences of poverty.

What are the Causes of poverty?

We can think of four major sets of causes for poverty. 1) First major set of causes includes the individual's laziness, lack of motivation, and lack of interest in education. People like this will eventually end up poor. **These may be called the behavioral causes of poverty.** 2) Second major set of causes includes wars, conflicts, lack of infrastructure, government's unresponsiveness to people's needs, lack of welfare programs, poor sanitation, poor public works, lack of affordable healthcare, etc. These causes are related to the malfunctioning and or inefficiencies of the government. **These are institutional causes of poverty.** 3) The third major set of causes of poverty includes natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, droughts, pandemics, climate change, etc. **These may be called the natural causes of poverty.** 4) **Finally,** the fourth major set of causes of poverty is social injustice, inequality, and discriminations. **These are the societal causes of poverty.**

Valluvar's Solution for the Eradication of Poverty Due to Behavioral Causes

Poverty from behavioral causes is self-imposed by the individuals. Thirukkural contains a chapter on “Not Being Lazy,” a chapter on “On Energy and Enthusiasm,” a chapter on “Perseverance,” a chapter on “Education,” and a chapter on “Illiteracy.” In the chapter on “Not Being Lazy,” Valluvar says, “If a man is lazy and has no enthusiasm, his family will be destroyed, and their crimes will multiply (Kural – 604).” To emphasize the importance of enthusiasm, Valluvar says, “Only those who possess enthusiasm have everything, and those without enthusiasm have nothing even if they have everything (Kural – 591).” He praises perseverance by saying, “Perseverance leads to prosperity; effortlessness results in poverty (Kural – 616).” He emphasizes the value of learning by saying, “Learning is the imperishable riches; all other things are not real riches (Kural – 400)”. He condemns the uneducated people as beasts (Kural – 410). In these and other Kurals, Valluvar advises people against laziness and encourages them to advance in life by acquiring the required knowledge and skills. These are Valluvar’s prescriptions for helping individuals to extricate themselves from poverty.

Valluvar’s Solution for Poverty from Other Three Causes

It is the government’s responsibility to avoid unnecessary wars, to ensure that the country has good infrastructure, welfare programs, affordable healthcare, employment opportunity, and unemployment benefits. Also, the government should have effective plans to handle natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, droughts, pandemics, etc. Valluvar says, “The king must protect his subjects (Kural – 549).” In another Kural, he mentions, “As the whole world looks to the sky for rain, all subjects look to the king for a just rule (Kural – 542).” According to Valluvar, it is the responsibility of the king to acquire, store, protect and distribute the wealth (Kural – 385).” Valluvar clearly states, “All human beings are equal by birth (Kural – 972).” Therefore, it is the government’s responsibility to have appropriate laws and enforce them so that people are protected against societal inequalities and discriminations. So, it is the responsibility of the ruler (or the government) to protect the people from poverty resulting from institutional, natural, and societal causes.

Causes and Effects of Poverty are Intertwined

Although the responsibilities for the various causes of poverty are clear, the situations may be more complicated in real life. For example, a man with a low level of education may experience poverty. Poverty may prevent him from pursuing further education and prevent him from providing higher education to his children. So, a low level of education causes poverty, and poverty in turn leads to low levels of education in the family. Similarly, the causes and effects of poverty from the institutional causes may also be inseparable. If a country is poor, it may not have good infrastructure. For example, the roads and bridges may be in poor condition needing repairs. If the infrastructure is not good, commerce and industry in that country will not flourish. When commerce and industry are affected, the country will have more unemployment and reduced national income. Lower national income will lead to more poverty. Thus, poverty causes poor infrastructure and in turn poor infrastructure causes poverty. So, what is the solution?

External Intervention is Necessary

In exceptional cases, an individual can extricate himself out of poverty by sheer discipline and hard work. So also, in some cases a country can get out of poverty through good leadership and dedicated hard work of the citizens. In most cases, an individual as well as a nation may need external help to rise above poverty. For example, a poor man with a low level of education needs help from an external source to continue his education. Even a young man with good education and enthusiasm, eager and willing to work will be poor if he lacks employment opportunities. He needs external intervention to get out of poverty. That external source can be the government or an employer. So also, a nation with poor infrastructure needs financial help from another nation or from an organization like the World Bank. So, a poor man or a poor nation may need external help to get out of poverty.

Charity and Philanthropy

The external intervention can be in the form of charity or philanthropy. Charity and philanthropy are different. Charity is a natural, emotional impulse to an immediate situation, and giving usually occurs in the short term. Philanthropy addresses the root causes of social issues and requires a more strategic, long-term approach. In the context of ThirukKural, charity is

giving food or giving a person what he needs when the individual comes and asks for food or help. Whereas philanthropy is realizing the need of poor people and fulfilling them without anyone explicitly asking for anything.

Valluvar says that “The removal of the fatal hunger of the destitute is the right place to deposit one’s wealth (Kural – 226).” In another Kural, he says that even if heaven is denied to you, it is better to help the poor through charity. He is of the strong opinion that there is nothing crueler than not being able to help the poor. According to him, there is nothing more worthwhile than being recognized for charity to the poor (Kural – 231). In these cases, someone is hungry and asks for food, and he is given food. These Kurals are in support of charity.

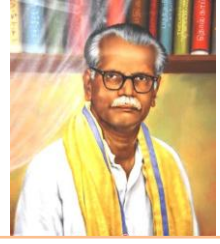
In Kural 212, Valluvar recommends philanthropy when he says, “All the wealth gained through hard work is for doing service to the deserving people.” In Kural 211, he says, “Rain does not expect anything in return. Similarly, duty to society demands nothing in return.” In these cases, a person realizes that everyone is alike and has compassion for the poor person. Help is offered to the needy person without being asked. That is philanthropy.

The same applies in the case of nations. Wealthy nations, large foundations, or an organization like the World Bank should help a poor country to get out of poverty. So, in general, elimination of poverty in the world is the joint responsibility of the individuals, the governments, and the society.



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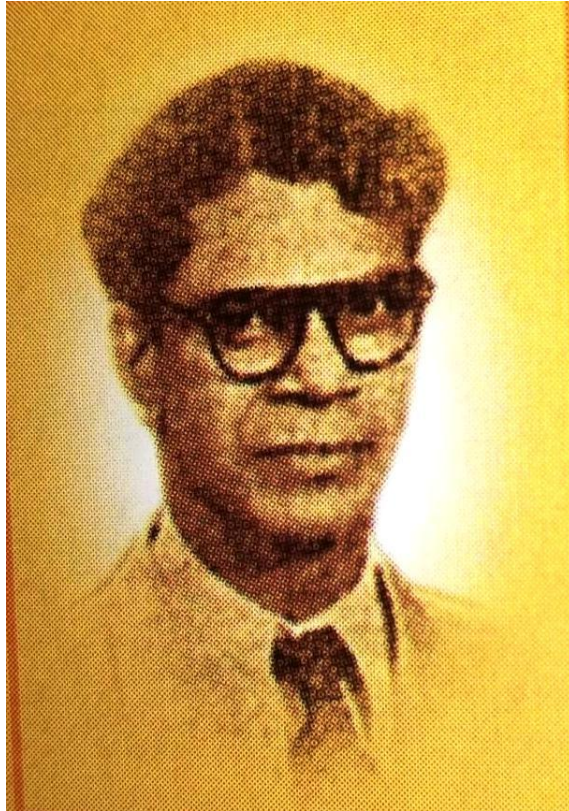
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Dr.A.Chidambaranathan Chettiyar

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Thiruvalluvar and modern conception of State

---Dr.A.Chidambaranathan chettiar

Dr.A.Chidambaranathan chettiar, popularly known as A.C.Chettiar, was born in 1907, got First Class First Rank in his M.A. degree examination. He is well versed both in English and Tamil languages. He got his Doctorate degree for his well written thesis on "The Advanced Study of Tamil Prosody". He served as Professor of Tamil at the Annamalai University and gave that post to join as the Chief Editor of English - Tamil Dictionary published by the University of Madras. He has toured in the East Asian Countries and in Europe. He is the author of many prose books and translations of Shakespearian dramas. As a Member of the Legislative Council of Madras State, he had accomplished yeoman service to the advancement of Tamil language and Tamil teachers.

Thiruvalluvar, who gave his monumental treatise entitled "Thirukkural" in the early century before the Christian era, had a noble conception of kingship. In several places, where kingship is talked about, that concept is found applicable to the State in general.

Whether it is a king that rules or it is a democratic ruler that rules, he should have the welfare of the subjects at heart. The requirements and qualifications for a king postulated in Thirukkural are found applicable to the Head of a sovereign Democratic Republic like our country. The Head of the State should be capable of planning, acquiring, preserving and distributing wealth.

According to Thiruvalluvar, fearlessness, liberality, wisdom and perseverance are traits which no king should lack. The head of a state should not procrastinate things but should take immediate steps to decide about matters engaging his attention and should be an erudite scholar. A benevolent ruler who has a sweet tongue will be able to command the homage of his subjects. A ruler, again, should be easily accessible and should not be prone to use harsh and unpalatable expressions. One other salient requirement of a king or ruler should be just and be prompted by a sense of fair play and integrity.

Thiruvalluvar has laid great emphasis on the righteousness of kings. He wants rulers to examine all cases thoroughly and properly without any predilections or prepossessions and to be unique in rendering justice without fear or favour.

Sometimes, it would look as though Thiruvalluvar has been paradoxical. For instance, in one place he has commended the enforcement of justice without fear or favour. In another place, in the chapter relating to "*kannottam*" (on kindliness), he has stated that a man without kindliness though he has eyes would not in reality be treated as having eyes proper; a man without kindliness of heart is a great burden to the earth.

It would thus seem paradoxical to underline the idea of kindliness in one place and the idea of enforcement of justice in another place. But, actually, Thiruvalluvar has been very careful in pointing out that the way of success of a ruler lies in the happy blending of justice and kindliness. For instance, in verse 578, he has stated that the word belongs to the ruler who is capable of showing mercy without adversely affecting justice.

In those days, when the notion of kingship covered the idea of the king being a divine representative, it is rather surprising to find that Thiruvalluvar has stated that the ruler must be prepared to hear unpalatable words from his advisers if those words are for the good of his country. Here is born the modern idea of an intelligent opposition.

In these days, we are accustomed to hear so much about the role of a well-organized, intelligent and watchful opposition. Thiruvalluvar's idea of a proper State has also envisaged the necessity for an opposition which would offer criticisms that might be bitter too.

Kural 389 this idea runs as follows:

"Cevikaippac corporukkum panpudai ventan kavikaik kiill tankum uluku."

The ruler according to Thiruvalluvar should take care to discuss threadbare the problems of the State with his advisers; if he does not do so but is wild at the suggestions of his followers, his prosperity will dwindle. That is to say, the leader of the ruling party, whatever it is, should consult the followers of the party before embarking on any new venture or method. If he does not consult the party men and is not guided by their advice he might be over-thrown.

Thiruvalluvar is of the view that rulers who are tyrannical will be praised only by uninformed people; the intelligentsia is sure to revolt when an occasion arises. A ruler should be always watchful of the interest of his subjects; he should keep an eye

on the officers working under him and cause justice to be meted out always and on all occasions. Such modern ideas are found enshrined in the aphorisms of Thiruvalluvar.

If a ruler is tyrannical, to live in a jungle may be better than to live in a city. This is an old Tamil adage. Thiruvalluvar says “if there is a king who does not render justice always, one had better be poor than rich”. The idea is that under an unrighteous ruler, the people with property will be under constant fear of expropriation.

Thiruvalluvar’s enjoinder of punishment for the wicked corresponds to modern jurisprudence. He wants the State to investigate every case properly and to punish the offender only so as to reform him and so as to see that the crime does not recur; he wants further that the punishment should only be so much as to befit the offence. He does not want heavy and disproportionate punishments. He is aware of the fact that all punishments should be with a view to correcting the offenders. People, in fact, should think that if they did wrong they would be punished and would not be let scot free. Therefore, he wants the ruler to show signs of harshness. But actually, he wants him to be soft too, whenever possible.

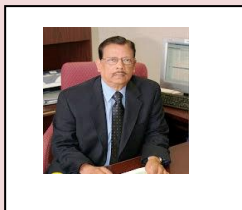
A ruler who awards punishments far in excess of the requirements of justice lays himself open to the attack of enemies and sometimes to the conquest by them.

For instance, in Kural 5 “Kadumolium kaiyikanta tandamum ventan
adumuran teykkum aram”

He said that severity in speech and excess in punishment are like the file which removes the capacity to destroy enemies. In other words, he said that a king or ruler of whom people speak of as a rough-mouthed tyrant will perish rapidly.

Ideas such as these which are gleaned from the chapters on Polity in Thirukkural give us an insight into Thiruvalluvar’s conception of State.

Valluvar on Anger



Dr. R. Prabhakaran

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Dr.R.Prabhakaran deserves all of our appreciation for his dedicated propagation of Thirukkural throughout the U.S. by his writings in journals & Internet and by his speeches in TV and internet continuously for more than two decades. His commentary of Puaranaanuuru is hailed by Tamil scholars. An industrial magnate-turned literary celebrity, he functions just like an one-man university to spread and impart the knowledge of Thirukkural and Sangam classics among the Tamil Diaspora in U.S.

Introduction

Anger is a common emotion. According to psychologists, “Anger is a strong emotion often caused by some form of wrong-doing, ill-treatment, or unfairness. We experience the feeling of anger when we think we have been mistreated or when we are faced with problems that keep us from getting what we want or attaining our personal goals. Everyone experiences anger, some more often than others.”

Researchers have observed that an average adult experiences anger about once a day and becomes annoyed or peeved about three times a day. Although anger is a common emotion experienced almost daily by almost everyone, depending upon the intensity and the frequency of experiencing anger, it affects our mental and physical health and our ability to have positive social interactions with others. It also affects our personal, family, and professional lives.

There is no place for anger

Valluvar has several interesting and profound observations regarding anger and its impact on human beings. There are occasions where one can afford to express one’s anger. Although the child psychologists may disagree, it is not unusual for the parents to express their anger at their children when they misbehave. Invariably, the children tolerate the parents' anger or occasionally react with their own anger. In any case, the parents can and do express their anger at their children. On the other hand, it is unusual for an employee to express his anger towards his superiors. If he does so, he will be subjected to punishments. So, there are

occasions when one can afford to express one's anger without serious consequences, and there are occasions when one cannot afford to do so.

Valluvar says if one is trying to control one's anger, one should do so in circumstances when one can afford to be angry. For example, if a parent is trying to control his/her anger, he/she should restrain from getting angry at his/her child. In general, it is better to control one's anger in all situations. The Greek philosopher Plato is said to have mentioned that there are two things a person should never be angry at, what they can help, and what they cannot. In other words, anger should be completely avoided under all circumstances. Valluvar expresses the same ideas in the following kurals.

He who controls his anger where he can afford to be angry is the one who really controls his anger. What difference does it make if one does not control one's anger where one cannot afford to be angry?

(Kural – 301)

Anger is destructive in situations where one cannot afford to be angry. There is nothing worse than that, even where one can afford to be angry.

(Kural – 302)

Only evil consequences arise out of anger. Therefore, forget about getting angry at anyone.

(Kural – 303)

The ill effects of anger

The American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as saying, "For every minute you remain angry, you give up sixty seconds of peace of mind." Undoubtedly, the loss of peace of mind leads to restlessness and unhappiness. Anger and happiness are diametrically opposite of each other. One does not coexist with the other. Valluvar is convinced that anger destroys laughter and joy, and thereby the angry person hurts himself like the one who slaps the ground with his hand and inflicts pain on oneself (kural - 307). Also, Valluvar believes that nothing else destroys the laughter of an individual like his own anger. The angry

person hurts himself by destroying his own happiness and hurts others at whom his anger is aimed. Because of his anger, his relationship with his kith and kin who support him will also be affected. In turn, they might also become angry and suffer the consequences of their anger.

He who considers anger an important quality to have is sure to hurt himself like the one who slaps the ground with his hand.

(Kural – 307)

Is there anything else that destroys laughter and joy like anger?

(Kural - 304)

Anger destroys the one who gets angry and one's kith and kin who support him like a lifeboat.

(Kural – 306)

In addition to destroying one's peace of mind, laughter, and happiness, anger also causes several catastrophic consequences for those who are in the habit of frequently becoming angry. Medical practitioners and psychologists believe that anger increases stress levels and blood pressure. Researchers have observed that there is a three times higher risk of having a stroke from a blood clot to the brain or bleeding within the brain during two hours after an angry outburst. For people with an aneurism in one of the arteries of the brain, there is a six times higher risk of rupturing this aneurism following an angry outburst. Due to anger, there could be additional consequences such as sleep disorders, anxiety disorder, depression, respiratory problems, weakened immune system, and even heart attack. All these consequences arising from various levels of anger tend to reduce the life span of the angry individuals. Valluvar would have had no way of knowing all these complications arising from anger. But he was sure that those who exhibit angry behavior are likely to die because of their anger.

If you want to protect yourself, guard against your anger. If you do not control your anger, your anger will kill you.

(Kural – 305)

Because of the multitude of evil consequences arising from anger, Valluvar advises that it is better to tolerate even if someone inflicts severe harm than to get angry. He admires those who do not retaliate with anger when harm is done to them. He says they are like the ascetics.

Even if someone tortures you like a scorching fire, it is better to control your anger. (Kural – 308)

Those who lose their temper are like the dead, and those who renounce anger are like the ascetics. (Kural – 310)

Other disadvantages of being angry

Those who are angry are not capable of clear thinking, and they are likely to make hasty decisions. Likewise, lust can also cloud a person's ability to think clearly. Anger and lust can also inhibit a person's ability to exercise self-restraint. Therefore, people with raging anger, excessive lust, and lacking in self-restraint can be easily defeated by others. Since anger and lust adversely impact a person's ability to think clearly, Valluvar says that if you were to pick an enemy to fight, choose the one who is prone to too much anger, lust and lacks self-restraint. Valluvar does not encourage fighting with anyone. He wants to state that anger and lust make a person vulnerable due to his lack of clarity in thinking and inability to exercise self-restraint.

One who is not free from anger and does not exercise self-restraint can easily be defeated by anyone at any time and at any place.
(Kural – 864)

If you were to pick an enemy, pick one who is blindsided by his rage and obsessed with excessive lust. (Kural – 866)

Anger and other related vices

Valluvar mentions that those who follow the path of virtue should avoid anger, envy, desire, and harsh words. Envy creates a desire for something that another person has. Being unable to obtain what one desires instigates anger, which leads to the use of harsh words.

Those who follow the path of virtue should avoid the four evils: envy, desire, anger, and harsh words. (Kural – 35)

Advantages of avoiding anger

Having described all the negative consequences that may arise from anger, Valluvar wants to mention some advantages resulting from avoiding anger:

- By staying free of anger, one can avoid all the negative consequences that accompany anger.
- Friends and relatives will surround those who are not prone to anger.
- Even for those who have achieved greatness, being free from anger adds dignity to their excellence.

No one in this vast world will have more friends and relatives than the man who gives generous gifts and is free from anger. (Kural - 526)

Freedom from arrogance, anger, and meanness spells dignity in greatness.

(Kural – 431)

A word of encouragement from Valluvar

Finally, by way of encouragement to those who want to be free from anger, Valluvar says that those who do not have anger in their heart will achieve all that they desire (Kural – 309). This may be a bit of an exaggerated claim. Irrespective of anger or lack of anger, one may not get everything that one desires. It is typical of Valluvar to exaggerate the importance of a particular virtue to encourage his readers to practice that virtue.

If a man does not harbor anger in his heart, he will obtain whatever he has in his mind. (Kural – 309)

Conclusion

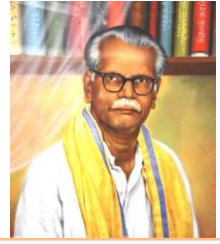
According to Valluvar, under no circumstances should one get angry. Anger causes major physical and mental health problems. Those who get angry are incapable of clear thinking, and their enemies can easily defeat them. However, in addition to being free from physical and mental health problems, those who are free

from anger will have many friends and relatives surrounding them and supporting them. In the case of those who are free from anger, their behavior will add dignity to their other accomplishments. Valluvar encourages his readers to avoid anger by saying that they will achieve whatever they desire if they can avoid anger. Considering the pros and cons, avoiding anger is best for one's well-being.



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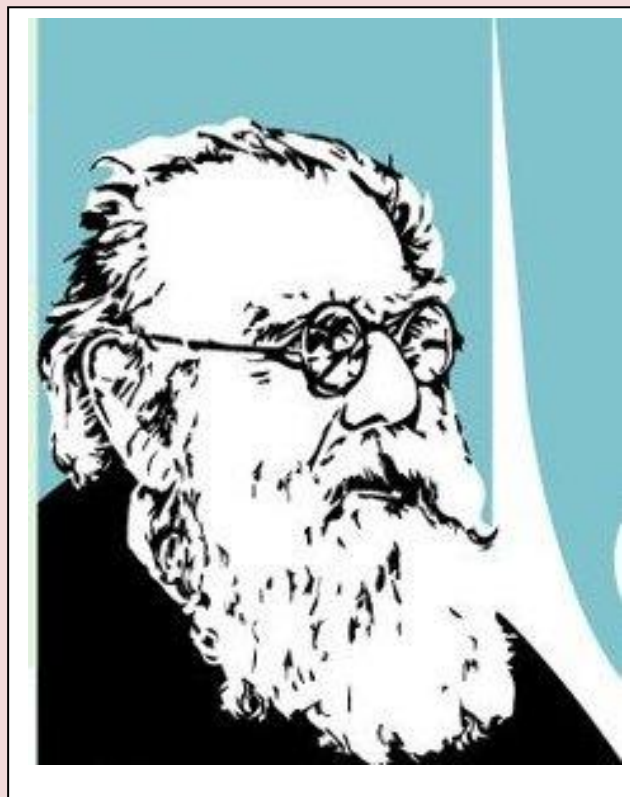
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Let us be thankful to our mentor and guiding star, Periyar!

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Let us be thankful to our mentor and guiding star, Periyar!

Periyar E.V.R. Periyar (17 September 1879 – 24 December 1973) in his earlier days of political career involved himself in the national movement and had an active participation in the Indian National Congress. The climate and context of the then Madras Presidency made Periyar metamorphose into a great reformer, iconoclast and revolutionary thinker. He became a legend in his life time and an indomitable force against all social evils. He fought against the Brahmin supremacy and succeeded in bringing out a government proclamation, called as Communal G.O., which enabled the oppressed castes to get their due share in the government posts. He founded the Self-respect Movement (1925) to achieve social reformation and at the same time took part in the Justice party to capture the political power from the Brahmins. The Justice party was re-organized in 1944 under the guidance of Periyar as the 'Dravidar Kazhagam' (Dravidian Association). It was a radical social reform movement and attracted the youth of Tamilnadu very much and it is now the guiding force for maintaining secularism and social awareness among the youth. Periyar (The Great Man) was a legend in his lifetime and an emancipator of a great significance. He can be compared to Mahatma Phule or Rajaram Mohan Roy, and deserves a very important place in the annals of Indian history. He was a Rajaram Mohan Roy in social reform, an Ambedkar in the uplift of Dalits, an Ingersoll in atheism, a Bertrand Russell in rational approach and a Mao in mass appeal and organizing skills.

In the whole of Tamil Nadu and even far beyond, within India and without, the honorific title, Periyar indicates the name of a great Twentieth century Social Reformer. The UNESCO awarded him a citation on 27 January 1970, calling him the Socrates of South India. The Govt. of India issued a postal stamp in memory of Periyar. The Govt. of Malaysia issued a stamp commemorating Periyar's 137th birth day on the 19th of Jan 2014 in Kuala Lumpur.

What Periyar earned in all his life has been made a public charity which is presently running about 40 institutions including a Deemed University at Thanjavur named after him. His outstanding and versatile disciple Dr. K. Veeramani has been disseminating Periyarism in USA, Europe and in South Asian countries. A publication unit founded by Periyar has so far brought out more than hundred titles in Tamil and English and a few titles in French, Hindi, Telugu and Malayalam also.

Periyar and his contribution for the struggle against all forms of oppression are still acting as a guiding force and even after forty eight years after his demise he induces through his writings which stimulate sincere thinkers who strive to usher in a new dawn. His onslaught on religious fanaticism is so powerful to provoke religious fundamentalists who are afraid of his iconoclastic views which have the powerful appeal to make the youth fight against the persecution and perpetration still carried on in the name of religion.

Here we bring a special issue on Periyar and it carries a detailed essay on **“Valluvar and Periyar, the Two Rationalists of Tamil Nadu.”**

The author of this special essay, Dr. Prabhakaran was in Mannargudi, Tamil Nadu. He graduated with a B.Sc. degree in Mathematics from University of Madras, Chennai, and M.Sc. degree in Mathematics from Annamalai University, Chidambaram. After working as a lecturer in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu for six years, he migrated to the USA and obtained his M.S. and Ph.D. in Computer Science and MBA in Information Management from U.S. universities. He has held senior positions in private companies, and he has also managed and directed Supercomputing facilities in NASA and U.S. Army.

Dr. Prabhakaran is deeply involved in Tamil language, Tamil literature, Tamil culture, and the welfare of Tamil people. He has served as President of the Washington Tamil Association, Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Foundation, and Vice President of the Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA).

In 2003, Dr. Prabhakaran founded the Tamil Literary Study Group in Washington, D.C. Under the auspices of this group, he conducted classes to teach Tamil literary classics such as Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, Kurunthokai, Silapthikaram, History of Tamil Literature, Naaladiyaar, etc. The Tamil Literary Study Group in Washington, D.C., which Dr. Prabhakaran started, serves as a model for the Tamils in many cities in the United States to gather and study Thirukkural and Sangam literature.

He has coordinated and successfully conducted major international conferences in the USA on Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, and Kurunthokai. Recently, he served as the Coordinator for the Thirukkural Essay Competition for high schools students in the USA.

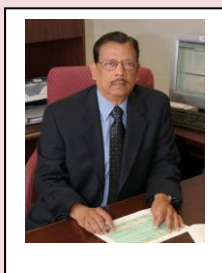
Dr. Prabhakaran has authored several blogs on Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, Kurunthokai, and other Tamil literary classics. His blogs are routinely visited and studied by thousands of Tamils in the USA, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the U.K., Russia, and many other countries.

Dr. Prabhakaran has published his commentaries on Puranaanuuru and Kurunthokai. He has also published his essays in English on Thirukkural as a book under the title, “The Ageless Wisdom (As embodied in Thirukkural).” His next book on Thirukkural, “புதிய பார்வையில் திருக்குறள்” will be released soon.

He has delivered several lectures on Thirukkural and Puranaanuuru in various cities in the USA and India. Recently, he completed a series of thirty-two lectures on Thirukkural on American Tamil Radio. His lectures are available on YouTube.

Dr. Prabhakaran considers promoting Thirukkural and Sangam Literature in western countries as his mission in life. He lives with his wife Geetha in Maryland, USA.

Valluvar and Periyar, the Two Rationalists of Tamil Nadu¹



Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Introduction

In the course of human history, there have been many philosophers, prophets, sages, and saints who have contributed to the development of philosophical ideas. Most of these great scholars had a religious bias and were inconsiderate in matters related to social justice, social equality, and rationalism. For example, despite his extraordinary ability for dialectical reasoning, Socrates (469 BC – 399 BC) believed in the infallibility of the Oracle of Delphi, and he never rejected the Athenian view of religion. Socrates’s ardent disciple Plato (428 BC – 348 BC) was proud of the fact that he was an Athenian and not a barbarian, and he was happy that he was born as a man instead of being born as a woman. In ancient Greece, which is considered the cradle of democracy, slavery was an accepted practice. Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC) says, “Some should rule, and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary but expedient. From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.” So, it is apparent that social equality was not considered the foundation of democracy by the ancient Greek philosophers. The Chinese philosopher Confucius (551 BC

¹ . This essay was first published in the magazine “Dravidap Pozhil, Oct – Dec. 2021”

– 479 BC) believed that heaven is the author of all virtue, and he considered heaven itself as a kind of God, and God created the virtue in us. The religious leaders Mahavira (540 BC – 468 BC) and the Buddha (563 BC – 483 BC) were concerned more about life after death rather than life on earth.

There have been only very few philosophers who were truly rational and secular in their thinking. Almost five hundred years after Socrates, Confucius, and the Buddha, in the state of Tamil Nadu, India there was an extraordinary man, who was an outstanding philosopher who analyzed almost all aspects of human life from a rational and secular standpoint and offered practical guidelines for a purposeful life on earth. Scholars consider his ideas to be eternally valid and universally acceptable. His name is Thiruvalluvar². His legacy is his *magnum opus* called Thirukkural, and it is considered a veritable guide for the “Art of Living.”

Thiruvalluvar and the Thirukkural

Thiruvalluvar is very well known in the state of Tamil Nadu, where people of all ages study his book. Many scholars from various countries have praised Valluvar’s ideas. For example, Professor Moriz Winternitz (1863-1937), an eminent Austrian orientalist, says, “Valluvar’s Thirukkural is one of the gems of the world literature. He (Valluvar) stands above all races, castes, and sects, and what he teaches is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder that the Kural has been read, studied and highly praised in the land of its origin for centuries, but also found many admirers in the west, ever since it has become known.” Dr. Albert Schweitzer (1875 – 1965), the German philosopher, physician, and Nobel laureate admired Valluvar’s positive view of the world and life as opposed to the “world and life negation” preached by the religions of India. Leo Tolstoy (1828 – 1910), the famous Russian novelist, was very impressed by Valluvar’s ideas about non-violence. Also, Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948) was so fascinated by the Kural that he wanted to learn the Tamil language so that he could study the original version of the Kural. Many other scholars and philosophers from various parts of the world have recognized and admired Valluvar’s profound yet pragmatic view of human life and the practical guidelines he has offered for a purposeful life. The Russians are said to have preserved important books of lasting value in the Kremlin in an indestructible tungsten chamber so that they may outlast even a nuclear attack and be useful to the posterity. The Kural is one of the books in that chamber. The Kural has been

². Thiruvalluvar is also referred to as Valluvar. His book is referred to as Thirukkural or simply the Kural (with the uppercase K). The individual poems are referred to as kural (with the lowercase k).

translated into more than forty languages of the world. The Kural is the most translated non-religious book in the world. Several authors have written many commentaries in Tamil, English, and other major languages of the world. There are more than 50 translations of the Kural in the English language alone.

Despite these adulations by eminent philosophers and the availability of numerous translations of the Kural, we know very little factual information about its author, Valluvar. Most of the biographical information available about Valluvar is anecdotal. The only thing that we know for certain is that he was born in the state of Tamil Nadu, which lies in the southeastern part of India. There is a controversy about his exact place of birth. Some people believe that he was born in Mylapore, a suburb of Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu. Others claim that he was born in the district of Kanyakumari, which lies in the southern tip of India.

Just like the mystery surrounding his place of birth, the year of Valluvar's birth is also an unresolved issue. A group of renowned Tamil scholars met in 1921 and decided that Valluvar should have been born in 31 BC. The government of the state of Tamil Nadu has officially recognized that Valluvar was born in 31 BC. Due to the uncertainty surrounding his exact year of birth, it is generally believed that Valluvar was born about 2000 years ago. From the various stories about his personal life, we infer that Valluvar was married, and his wife's name was Vasuki.

Assuming that Valluvar was born about 2000 years ago, the primary religions in Tamil Nadu and India during that time were the Vedic religion (the forerunner of modern-day Hinduism), Jainism, and Buddhism. Although we find some similarities between the Kural and the three religions, Valluvar differs significantly from them. In fact, his book is strictly secular. While the focus of the religions is life after death, Valluvar's focus is life on earth. His philosophy is based on life and world affirmation. His message is one of virtue, truth, non-violence, love, and compassion towards all living beings of the world. His book contains solutions for the problems we face today and humanity's problems in the future. Valluvar's Kural stands tall as a beacon light forever guiding humanity.

Aryans and Their Philosophy

According to historians, Aryan migration into Tamil Nadu began approximately about 1,000 BC. During that time, the Aryans' religion was the Vedic religion which was based on the Vedas and Upanishads. The essential features of the Vedic religion are as follows:

- The goals of human life are *dharma* (righteousness, moral values), *artha* (prosperity, economic values), *kama* (pleasure, love, psychological values), and *moksha* (liberation, spiritual values).
- The Lord³ created four classes of people: the *Brahmin*, the *Kshatriya*, the *Vaisya*, and the *Sudra*, from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet, respectively.
- These classes are distinct. The class to which a person belongs is determined by his birth. Those born to *Brahmins* are *Brahmins*; those born to *Kshatriyas* are *Kshatriyas*, and so on. A person has no way of changing the class to which he belongs. Of these four classes, the *Brahmins* were considered the most superior class. The next three classes are *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas*, and *Sudras*. Each class of people had pre-determined duties. The *Brahmins* are the priests. The *Kshatriyas* are the warriors. The *Vaisyas* are businessmen and agriculturists. The only duty assigned to the *Sudras* was to serve the other three higher classes of people. In addition to the four classes, there were people belonging to the fifth class called *Panchamas*, and they were considered the lowest class of people, and they were the untouchables.
- The Vedic religion advocates the social doctrine of four stages of life. It maintains that one should first become a celibate student, then become a married householder discharging his duties to his ancestors by begetting sons and to the gods by sacrificing; then retire with or without his wife to the forest to devote himself to spiritual contemplation; and finally, become a homeless wandering ascetic and devote himself to the pursuit of liberation (salvation). These four stages apply only to the top three classes and not to the *Sudras*.
- The Aryans prayed to the gods *Indra*, *Agni*, *Vayu*, and *Varuna*. During the prayers, it was customary to make animal sacrifices and eat the sacrificed animal's meat and consume a liquor known as *soma*.
- Women were considered fickle, unreliable, corrupt, and licentious, and therefore it was thought that they should not have any independence, and they should be protected all the time⁴.

The Tamil Society during the Days of Valluvar

The *Sangam* period is the period of the history of ancient Tamil Nadu spanning from 500 BC to 200 AD. This period got its name from the famous *Sangam* academy of poets and scholars who gathered in the city of Madurai during that period. The classical literary masterpieces called *Ettuthokai* and *Pattupattu*, which contain Tamil poems written by many

³. Manusmriti 1:31, Bhagavad – Gita 4:13

⁴. Manusmriti, 2:213, 9:14, 9:15, 9:16, 9:17, 9:2, 9:3, 9:5, 5: 147, 5:149, 8:299, 5:151.

scholars, belong to this period, and they are referred to as *Sangam* literature. *Sangam* literature and the *Kural* contain valuable information about the Tamil society and the life of Tamils during the *Sangam* period. Some of the significant facts about the Tamil society during the days of Valluvar can be summarized as follows:

- According to the Tamil people of the *Sangam* period, the goals of human life are Virtue, Wealth, and Love. Salvation was not considered a goal to be sought after.
- After the Aryan migration, their influence in Tamil Nadu was slowly growing. The Aryans successfully influenced some of the Tamil kings. For example, the *Pandia* king *Muthukudumi Peruvazhuthi* and the *Chola* King *Rajasuyam Vaetta Perunarkilli* of the *Chola* kingdom performed elaborate Vedic religious rituals with the help of the *Brahmin* priests. Out of the many kings in the *Sangam* period, only very few seem to have been positively influenced by the *Brahmins*.
- Although the Tamil scholars of the *Sangam* period were aware of the belief systems and Aryan values, the general public was not aware of them. But the Tamil society tolerated the *Brahmins* and even respected them for their knowledge.
- The concept of class structure by birth (*Varna*) was popular only among the Aryans and not with others in Tamil society. The Tamil society did not have a class structure as described in *Manusmriti*.
- In general, the Tamil people neither adopted the Aryan values nor opposed them. They were apathetic towards them. But the influence of the Aryans was gradually growing in the Tamil society from 1,000 BC onwards.
- The Aryans prayed to *Indra*, *Agni*, and other gods of that ilk. They believed in an omnipotent God who created the universe. The Tamil people did not have the concept of an all-powerful God who created the universe. Mostly they worshipped nature. They believed that there is no God other than their heroic ancestors⁵. The tombstones of warriors were worshipped with reverence. On special occasions, they prayed to Tamil God *Murugan*.
- Women enjoyed a respectable position in society. *Sangam* literature is a collection of 2436 poems written by 473 poets, and out of them were 30 were women. This shows that women had access to education during the *Sangam* period and were considered respectable members of the household and society.

Valluvar's Repudiation of the Aryan values

⁵ . Mangudi Kizhar, *Puranaanuuru* - 335

A close examination of the Kural reveals the fact that Valluvar did not approve of the Aryan values. The following are some examples where Valluvar disagrees with the Aryan values and philosophy.

- According to *Sangam* literature and *Tholkappiyam*, the goals of human life are virtue, wealth, and love. Salvation was not considered a goal. Consistent with *Sangam* literature and *Tholkappiyam* and in contradiction to the Aryan values, Valluvar also considers virtue, wealth, and love the three goals of human life.
- The Vedic religion has a mixed message about killing animals. While it emphasizes that non-violence is the duty of all classes of people, it allows killing animals for sacrificial purposes and eating the meat of the sacrificed animals⁶. *Manusmiriti*⁷ says that the meat of an animal can be eaten after it has been killed for sacrificial purposes. Also, according to *Manusmiriti*, meat can be eaten when someone is in dire need of food. Valluvar is critical of this stance of the Vedic religion regarding meat-eating. He condemns animal sacrifice and meat-eating.

Not killing and eating the meat of an animal is better than a thousand sacrificial offerings.

(kural – 259⁸)

- In opposition to the Vedic religion's class structure (*Varna*), Valluvar declares that all are equal by birth (kural – 972). In kural 973, Valluvar mentions that greatness is not necessarily associated with birth, and in kural 133, he says that one's greatness really depends on one's character.

All human beings are equal by birth, but distinctions arise only because of the different qualities of their actions. (kural – 972⁹)

⁶. *Manusmiriti* 10:63

⁷. *Manusmiriti* 5:27

⁸. அவிசொரிந் தாயிரம் வேட்டலின் ஒன்றன்
உயிர்செகுத் துண்ணாமை நன்று. (kural – 259)

⁹. பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா உயிர்க்கும் சிறப்பொவ்வா
செய்தொழில் வேற்றுமை யான். (kural – 972)

Even if considered high by accident of birth, persons without good character are not necessarily noble; so also, people considered low by accident of birth are not necessarily low. (kural – 973¹⁰)

Good character is a sign of greatness, and lack of good character is a sign of meanness. (kural – 133¹¹)

- The concept of the four stages of human life never gained ground in Tamil society. In *Sangam* literature, there is no reference to *vanaprastha* when according to the Aryans, a married man goes to a forest with or without his wife and contemplates spiritual matters. Tamil literature only mentions the life of a householder and an ascetic. Valluvar considers one who lives as a householder with his family is superior to the one who becomes an ascetic in search of his own salvation. He questions the value of *Vanaprastha* and ascetic ways of life.

If one leads a virtuous family life, what else can one gain by following other ways of life. (kural – 46¹²)

He who leads his family life the right way is superior to the ascetics who aspire for a better life in the next world. (kural – 47¹³)

¹⁰. மேலிருந்தும் மேலல்லார் மேலல்லர் கீழிருந்தும்
கீழல்லார் கீழல் லவர். (kural – 973)

¹¹. ஒழுக்கம் உடைமை குடிமை இழுக்கம்
இழிந்த பிறப்பாய் விடும். (kural -133)

¹². அறத்தாற்றின் இல்வாழ்க்கை ஆற்றின் புறத்தாற்றில்
போலும் பெறுவ தெவன்? (kural – 46)

¹³. இயல்பினான் இல்வாழ்க்கை வாழ்பவன் என்பான்
முயல்வாருள் எல்லாம் தலை. (kural – 47)

The effort of he who guides others to lead a virtuous life and leading a life that does not deviate from virtue is more of a penance than the penance of the ascetics.

(kural –
48¹⁴)

- In contradiction to what *Manusmiriti* says, Valluvar holds women in high regard and according to him the greatness of family life is determined by a good wife. Valluvar insists that chastity is a great virtue to be practiced by all women, and they do that through their own will and determination.

The Tamil Society in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Since the beginning of Aryan infiltration into Tamil Nadu, the Tamil society has radically changed in many respects. The Vedic religion has turned into Hinduism. Thousands of temples have been built in Tamil Nadu for various gods. *Brahmins* have successfully brainwashed the Tamil people into believing the Hindu religion and the multitude of religious rituals. The Tamil people who during *the Sangam* period worshipped nature and few deities of their own started praying to a whole host of new pantheon of Hindu gods and they have become infatuated with the Hindu religious festivals. Around the nineteenth century, religion and the religious rituals have become almost an obsession with most Tamil people. There were religious rituals to be performed on several occasions. For example, marriages, certain months during pregnancy, birth of a child, death, death anniversaries, groundbreaking for a building, and housewarming were some of the occasions when the religious ceremonies were performed. *Brahmins* were the ones who officiated as priests in the temples and during the religious ceremonies. *Brahmins* were rewarded well for their services. Because of their close connection with the religion, the *Brahmins* enjoyed a special status in society, and they were considered a superior class of people.

Due to the influence of Jainism from 500 BC to 600 AD, *Brahmins* became strict vegetarians. Imitating the *Brahmins*, some members of the Tamil community also became vegetarians. The vegetarians were considered to belong to higher castes. The people who did manual work were looked down upon and were considered lower castes. The people engaged in certain occupations like washermen, scavengers, barbers, cobblers, and a few

¹⁴. ஆற்றின் ஒழுக்கி அறனிழுக்கா இல்வாழ்க்கை
நோற்பாரின் நோன்மை உடைத்து.

(kural – 48)

others were regarded as the lowest class and untouchables. These people were not allowed to walk in the streets surrounding the temples, and they were definitely prohibited from entering the Hindu temples. The casteless Tamil society of the *Sangam* period had become one in which several castes have sprung up, and there was a graded inequality in the society.

Because the *Brahmins* were considered superior, they became entitled to several privileges. They had access to education while others were denied educational opportunities. As a result, around the 19th century, the *Brahmins*, who consisted of less than 3% of the population of Tamil Nadu, had more than 70% of all lucrative jobs such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other government jobs.

During the *Sangam* period, the Tamils were well versed in music and used many indigenous musical instruments. They also had a variety of dances. Around the 19th century, native Tamil music was modified as Carnatic music, which the *Brahmins* promoted. Most of the songs were in the Telugu language instead of Tamil. The *Brahmins* also modified the native dances of Tamil people and called it *Bharatanatyam* and concocted a story that it was the dance form codified by the mythical rishi (sage) Bharatha. During the 19th century, the classical language Tamil which has a rich and robust collection of literature, was losing its purity because of the influence of Sanskrit. Many Sanskrit words replaced the Tamil words. Many writers and speakers routinely substituted Sanskrit words for Tamil words. Even some of the names of the cities and towns were replaced by their Sanskrit equivalents.

Thanthai Periyar

During the 19th century, when the Tamil society was undergoing significant detrimental changes to its pride and prestige, the social reformer and activist Thanthai Periyar was born to Vankatappa and Chinna Thayammal on 17 September 1879. Thanthai Periyar's given name was Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy. He was conferred the title of Periyar in 1938 at the Conference of the Progressive Women's Association. The term "Periyar" means "Respected One" or "Elder". After 1938, he was always referred to as Periyar. He was also affectionately called Thanthai Periyar by his followers. The Tamil word "Thanthai" means a "respected father-like person." Periyar attended elementary school for five years. At the age of twelve, he joined his father in their family business. During his teenage years, he used to attend religious discourses at his house. Those discourses were organized by his parents and conducted by the *Brahmin* pundits. Periyar found several contradictions and superstitious ideas in the religious stories narrated by the Brahmin pundits.

Later in 1904, Periyar had a disagreement with his father, and he left his home and traveled to North India. During his travel, he reached Kaasi, the city of the holy temple of Lord *Shiva*. He found the so-called holy river the Ganges was filthy and dead bodies were floating on it. One day, he had nothing to eat, and he was famished. He found a place where free food was given to *Brahmins*. He wore a thread across his chest like the *Brahmins* and entered the place where food was served. Although he had the thread across his chest like the *Brahmins*, he also had a mustache which was against the *Brahmins'* customs. The people serving food immediately found out he was not a *Brahmin*, and they refused to serve him food and kicked him out. Because of his excruciating hunger, he ended up eating the leftover food thrown in the street. The place that was serving the food was a charity organized by a non-*Brahmin*. But at that place, Periyar, a non-*Brahmin*, was not served food, whereas the *Brahmins* enjoyed the non-*Brahmin's* hospitality! The discrimination and insult that he experienced dealt a blow to Periyar's regard for Hinduism. That incident created a deep hatred in the mind of Periyar against the *Brahminical* practices and a disbelief in the innumerable gods revered by the *Brahmins*. Periyar decided to fight against the dominance of the *Brahmins* over the non-*Brahmins* in every walk of life.

The incident at Kaasi convinced Periyar that the Indian society, particularly the Tamil society, was utterly lacking in social justice. He realized that the *Brahmins* had undue influence and power, and they were dominating all facets of Tamil society. He knew that the power of the *Brahmins* came from the Hindu religion. He wanted to abolish the caste system and the practice of untouchability and transform the society in which there was no caste-based discrimination, and all were treated equally.

In the town of Vaikom in the neighboring state of Kerala, the people belonging to certain lower castes were not allowed to walk on the streets surrounding the temple. Periyar was invited to take up the leadership in the protest against such prohibition. He led an agitation defying such a ban and was sentenced to undergo imprisonment. Periyar's courageous efforts put an end to the discrimination at Vaikom, and he was conferred the title of 'Hero of Vaikom'. During this time, Periyar was the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. He has been trying to get the Congress Party to approve the Communal Reservation in Government jobs and education for the non-*Brahmins* to eliminate discrimination against them. But his efforts for establishing Communal Representation were defeated by the *Brahmin*-dominated Congress Party. After that, he quit the Congress Party and founded the Self-Respect Movement. With Periyar's help and support, the Communal Reservation scheme was implemented by the Justice Party. Subsequently, in 1944 the

Justice Party was changed to *Dravidar Kazhagam*, and Periyar presided over *Dravidar Kazagam* for the rest of his life.

In addition to fighting for social justice, Periyar was also concerned about how women were treated in Tamil Nadu. Till the first half of the 20th century, child marriages were common in India. In fact, the *Brahmins* claimed that according to their religious books, it was a sin to conduct the marriage of a daughter after she attained puberty. According to the *Brahmins*, child marriage was the right thing to do. Periyar strongly condemned the practice of child marriages. Also, widow remarriages were completely unheard of in Tamil society. Periyar conducted the marriage of his niece, who had become a widow at the young age of nine. Till 1956, women did not have the right to inherit properties from their parents or their deceased husbands. Young girls were not educated once they reached puberty. Periyar argued in favor of education for women. He claimed that Tamil society treated women as sex slaves, domestic servants, and childbearing machines. He strongly advocated husbands and wives to adopt birth control. Periyar wanted girls and women to get educated and be treated as equals to their male counterparts. He insisted that women should have equal opportunities for education and employment. He criticized the hypocrisy of chastity for women and argued that it should either also apply to men or not at all for both genders. He was in favor of women taking jobs in the police departments and the army.

Throughout his life, Periyar was a warrior fighting for social justice. Periyar insisted that the non-*Brahmins* should have self-respect and should not consider themselves inferior to anyone else. Periyar also told his followers to analyze everything using a rational approach. Self-respect and rationalism were Periyar's weapons in the fight for women's rights and social justice. He traveled countless miles and delivered thousands of lectures in every nook and corner of Tamil Nadu, promoting rationalism and self-respect among the Tamils.

Periyar was critical of the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata and other religious texts. He was fond of Thirukkural, and he considered that as the only book worth reading. He found that Thirukkural echoes his own views on many issues.

Periyar and Thirukkural

Thirukkural was written approximately about 2000 years ago. It has been quoted extensively in literary works like *Silappadhikaram* and *Manimekalai*, which came about two centuries later. Around the sixth century, when the devotional literature came into the Tamil

literary scene, Thirukkural took a backstage. Around the eleventh century, *Thiruvalluvamaalai* was written in praise of Thirukkural. *Thiruvalluvamaalai* consists of fifty-five short poems. The poets whose names appear in *Thiruvalluvamaalai* did not live during the eleventh century. Actually, those poets belonged to the *Sangam* period (500 BC – 200 AD). Because those poets were well known, somebody might have used their names and wrote those poems to praise Thirukkural. After *Thiruvalluvamaalai*, ten famous scholars wrote their commentaries on Thirukkural. The most famous of those commentators was Parimelazhagar, who wrote his commentary on Thirukkural during the fourteenth century. Thirukkural was printed for the first time in 1812. Rev. G. U. Pope published his English translation of Thirukkural in 1886. Subsequently, many commentaries in Tamil, English, and other languages appeared.

Despite the translations, commentaries, and printed editions, as late as the middle of the twentieth century, Thirukkural was still only in the parlor of the pundits. Tamil scholars considered Thirukkural as just a book in Tamil literature. Thirukkural is not just a book in Tamil literature. It deals with virtue, love, compassion, charity, friendship, politics, leadership, management, economics, and human psychology. In fact, it deals with all facets of human life and serves as a true guide for humanity. Periyar made a detailed study of Thirukkural. He found that Thirukkural contains ideas that are very similar to his own. He recognized the greatness of Thirukkural and its usefulness to the Tamil society, and he decided to bring it out from the pundits' parlor to the public square.

Periyar was always against class and caste systems which discriminated against the people by their birth. He was also highly critical of male dominance in Tamil society and how women were treated. According to him, all are equal by birth. He found a kindred spirit in Valluvar. Valluvar expresses the same idea in Kural 972. In Kural 973, Valluvar mentions that greatness is not necessarily associated with birth, and in Kural 133, he says that one's greatness really depends on his character. From Kurals 972, 973, and 133, we see that Valluvar and Periyar are in complete agreement.

According to Periyar, people should use rational thinking and avoid superstitions. Periyar said, "No matter what anyone says, don't believe it. Use your intellect and rational thinking ability and analyze it and accept it if it seems right to you; if not, do not accept it. Even if I say something, examine it, and accept it only if it seems right to you." In the following Kural, we see that Valluvar and Periyar are again in complete agreement.

To discern the real truth in whatsoever is heard from whomsoever is real wisdom.

(Kural - 423¹⁵)

Periyar did not believe in God or any such supernatural power. To him, one should work hard in order to be successful in life. We find similar ideas in the Kural regarding the importance of hard work for success in life.

Persistent hard work will bring about good fortune, and indolence will bring about poverty. (kural –

616¹⁶)

Even if gods cannot help you, your hard work will undoubtedly be appropriately rewarded. (kural –

619¹⁷)

One should not feel disheartened when a task seems impossible; persistent efforts will lead to greatness.

(kural – 611¹⁸)

People who work hard relentlessly will overcome the so-called “fate”. (kural – 620¹⁹)

¹⁵. எப்பொருள் யார்யார்வாய்க் கேட்பினும் அப்பொருள்
மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்ப தறிவு. (kural – 423)

¹⁶. முயற்சி திருவினை ஆக்கும் முயற்றின்மை
இன்மை புகுத்தி விடும். (kural – 616)

¹⁷. தெய்வத்தான் ஆகா தெனினும் முயற்சிதன்
மெய்வருத்தக் கூலி தரும். (kural – 619)

¹⁸. அருமை உடைத்தென்று அசாவாமை வேண்டும்
பெருமை முயற்சி தரும். (kural – 611)

¹⁹. ஊழையும் உப்பக்கம் காண்பர் உலைவின்றித்
தாழாது உருற்று பவர். (kural – 620)

Periyar recognized that Valluvar's Kural contains ideas that are very close to his ideas. He also realized that although the Kural had valuable and essential ideas, it had not reached the public at large. He decided to promote the Kural. As a first step, in 1929, he printed the Kural and sold it for a small price of eight annas (eight annas would have been the equivalent of a few cents) so that most of the people could easily afford to buy the book. Later he sold the pocket edition of the Kural for six annas, and in 1949 he sold the same for five annas. In 1949 he organized and conducted a very successful two-day conference on Thirukkural. That was the first Thirukkural Conference that was ever held anywhere in the world. Several leading Tamil scholars participated in the Conference, and the Conference was a great success. After that, Periyar routinely continued to mention the Kural in his speeches and writings. Some of Periyar's comments about the Kural are as follows:

- The art, culture, morals, ethics, etc., of the Aryans were totally different from the art, culture, morals, norms, etc. of the Tamils. Thirukkural was specially written to expose their differences.
- Thirukkural was written to repudiate Aryan principles and their way of life.
- The Buddha rejected and refuted the Aryan religion and its rituals. Thirukkural is doing precisely the same thing as what the Buddha did.
- Thirukkural can be of great use in our lives.
- There are no superstitious ideas in Thirukkural.
- Those who study Thirukkural will definitely gain self-respect.
- No one, including Muslims and Christians, will refute the ideas in Thirukkural.
- If someone asks you, "What is your religion?" you say that your religion is Thirukkural. If someone asks you, "What is your code of conduct?" you say that your code of conduct is Thirukkural.
- Thirukkural is the perfect medicine for Aryan hypocrisy. Thirukkural is a book that repudiates *Manusmriti*.
- You can take what you want from Thirukkural and ignore the ideas you don't want.
- Thiruvalluvar is an ideal socialist.
- Ideas needed for the welfare of the people are in abundance in Thirukkural.
- Thirukkural is a shield for us in the fight against *Brahminism* and the *Brahmins'* superstitious beliefs.

Thanks to Periyar's leadership after 1950, there was a remarkable resurgence in the interest in Thirukkural among the Tamil society. The credit also goes to *Dravidar Kazhagam* and *Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam*.

Thiruvalluvar and Thanthai Periyar

Thiruvalluvar wrote the Kural in order to condemn and refute the *Brahminic* beliefs, rituals, and superstitions. Recently, some people have started a campaign to belittle the greatness of Thirukkural by falsely claiming that the Kural is an abridgement of *Sastras*. The *Sastras* espouse the Vedic religious beliefs, and Valluvar's Kural directly opposes Vedic beliefs. Valluvar's concept of virtue is the same irrespective of their birth status whereas, the Aryan *Sastras*' concept of *dharma* depends on the class to which one belongs. They also state that Valluvar's kural in the section on Wealth are based on *Athasastra*. They fail to recognize that *Arthasastra* favors "the end justifying the means" whereas, the Kural is in favor of "means justifying the end." Another false and absurd claim by these *Brahmin* zealots is that the Section on Love in the Kural is based on *Kamasutra*. There could be nothing farther from the truth. *Kamasutra* is a guide to covet another man's wife and it contains explicit details of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman like a pornographic manual. Valluvar found that the Aryan values and beliefs were contrary to Tamil culture, and he wanted the Tamils to be aware of it, and that is why he wrote the Kural. The Kural is definitely not an abridgement of *Sastras*.

Like Valluvar, Periyar also could not accept *Brahminism* and its beliefs. Periyar found that the Vedic religion and its successor Hinduism were responsible for the *Brahmin* domination, caste system, and other social injustices. He also realized that Tamil people were docile and had no self-respect and accepted the *Brahmins*' claim for superiority. Periyar was indignant at the state of affairs in Tamil Nadu and started his Self-Respect movement. He fought for communal representation, women's rights, abolition of the caste system, and other social justice issues.

Both Periyar and Valluvar fought against the *Brahminic* culture, religion, rituals, and superstitions. Valluvar did not have an organization behind him to support and propagate his messages. But Periyar had his party, *Dravidar Kazhagam* extending its wholehearted and unstinting support for his plans and programs. Periyar was able to bring about permanent and irrevocable changes in Tamil society. With his ideas of self-respect and rationalism, he has started a renaissance in Tamil society.

There is a kural that aptly describes Periyar's service to the Tamil Community. Valluvar says in kural 1028²⁰ that one who wants to serve the community cannot waste his

²⁰. குடிசெய்வார்க் கில்லை பருவம் மடிசெய்து
மானங் கருதக் கெடும்.

(kural – 1028)

energy on time and season considerations or dignity in the performance of that task. In the course of his service to Tamil society, Periyar has encountered imprisonment and insults. Those things never bothered him. He continued his relentless service till the ripe old age of ninety-four.

Conclusion

Valluvar and Periyar are two remarkable rationalists the world has ever seen. Tamil people can legitimately be proud of both of them. We should study and follow the immortal words of wisdom of Valluvar. Periyar is often referred to as Thanthai Periyar, which means he is a father-like person. When Valluvar talks about what a father should do to his son, he says that he should prepare him for a prominent role in the assembly of the learned (kural - 67²¹). Because of Periyar, most of the Tamils of the past two generations have had the opportunity for education and advancement in their lives. So, Periyar, the father-like person, has done his duty. In kural 70²², where Valluvar talks about how a son should reward his father, he says that it is the son's responsibility to conduct himself so that others would admire how hard this man's father should have worked to groom him like this. So, the Tamil people owe a debt of gratitude to Periyar and they should live up to his expectations.

²¹. தந்தை மகற்காற்று நன்றி அவையத்து
முந்தி இருப்பச் செயல். (kural – 67)

²². மகன்தந்தைக்கு ஆற்றும் உதவி இவன்தந்தை
என்னோற்றான் கொல் எனும் சொல். (kural – 70)

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Thiruvalluvar statue in Reunion

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Thiruvalluvar on Accumulation and Distribution of Wealth

Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Maryland, USA



The author of this essay, Dr. Prabhakaran was in Mannargudi, Tamil Nadu. He graduated with a B.Sc. degree in Mathematics from the University of Madras, Chennai, and an M.Sc. degree in Mathematics from Annamalai University, Chidambaram. After working as a lecturer in engineering colleges in Tamil Nadu for six years, he migrated to the USA and obtained his M.S. and Ph.D. in Computer Science and MBA in Information Management from U.S. universities. He has held senior positions in private companies, and he has also managed and directed Supercomputing facilities in NASA and U.S. Army.

Dr. Prabhakaran is deeply involved in Tamil language, Tamil literature, Tamil culture, and the welfare of Tamil people. He has served as President of the Washington Tamil Association, Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Foundation, and Vice President of the Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA).

In 2003, Dr. Prabhakaran founded the Tamil Literary Study Group in Washington, D.C. Under the auspices of this group, he conducted classes to teach Tamil literary classics such as Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, Kurunthokai, Silapthikaram, History of Tamil Literature, Naaladiyaar, etc. The Tamil Literary Study Group in Washington, D.C., which Dr. Prabhakaran started, serves as a model for the Tamils in many cities in the United States to gather and study Thirukkural and Sangam literature.

He has coordinated and successfully conducted major international conferences in the USA on Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, and Kurunthokai. Recently, he served as the Coordinator for the Thirukkural Essay Competition for high schools students in the USA.

Dr. Prabhakaran has authored several blogs on Thirukkural, Puranaanuuru, Kurunthokai, and other Tamil literary classics. His blogs are routinely visited and studied by thousands of Tamils in the USA, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the U.K., Russia, and many other countries.

Dr. Prabhakaran has published his commentaries on Puranaanuuru and Kurunthokai. He has also published his essays in English on Thirukkural as a book under the title, "The Ageless Wisdom (As embodied in Thirukkural)." His next book on Thirukkural, "புதிய பார்வையில் திருக்குறள்" will be released soon.

He has delivered several lectures on Thirukkural and Puranaanuuru in various cities in the USA and India. Recently, he completed a series of thirty-two lectures on Thirukkural on American Tamil Radio. His lectures are available on YouTube.

Dr. Prabhakaran considers promoting Thirukkural and Sangam Literature in western countries as his mission in life. He lives with his wife Geetha in Maryland, USA.

Introduction

Thiruvalluvar (or Valluvar for short) deals with virtue, wealth and love in his *magnum opus* Thirukkural. In Thirukkural, he insists that virtue and righteousness should be the basis for all human endeavors, including wealth accumulation. Generally, the word "wealth" implies an abundance of valuable material possessions or resources. But in the context of Thirukkural, the term "wealth" simply means valuable material possessions or resources. According to Valluvar, wealth is essential both for an individual and a country. He also believes that accumulated wealth should be used to help those in need.

The Importance of Wealth for an Individual

The ultimate goal of many religions is to prepare their followers to lead a life of virtue so that they will go to heaven after their death and have a better life in their next birth if they have one. The eastern religions posit that it is possible for those who pursue an ascetic's life of penance and devoid of all attachments to be free from future births. Valluvar considers the ascetic lifestyle an option for those deeply interested in salvation. In reality, the vast majority of the people always tend to follow the domestic lifestyle where they live with their families and are more concerned with their day-to-day lives rather than salvation. Valluvar believes that the lifestyle of a virtuous householder is superior to that of the ascetic's lifestyle, which is aimed at one's own salvation.

If one leads a virtuous family life, what else can one gain by following other
ways of life? (kural - 46)

He who leads his family life the right way is superior to the ascetics who
aspire for a better life in the next world. (kural - 47)

A man who leads an ideal life in this world will be ranked amongst the gods in heaven.
(kural - 50)

According to Valluvar, a householder leading a family life has an obligation to support his wife, children, parents, the ascetics, the needy, the desolate, the ancestors, gods, guests, relatives, and self.

A man leading domestic life is one who supports his parents, wife, and children.

(kural – 41)

A man leading domestic life is the one who supports the ascetics,
the needy and the desolate.

(kural – 42)

It is the primary duty of the family man to support his ancestors, gods,
guests, relatives, and self.

(kural – 43)

If a householder is expected to support the long list of dependents mentioned above, he must have the financial means to do so. Therefore, the householder must earn and accumulate wealth to support others who depend on him. Valluvar is very emphatic about the need for wealth in this world. According to him, even a worthless man is considered worthy if he has wealth (Kural – 751). He says that everyone despises the indigents, but everyone praises the wealthy (Kural – 752). In view of the importance of wealth, Valluvar says, "Acquire wealth, for there is no sharper sword than that to destroy the pride and confidence of your enemy (kural -759)."

The Importance of Wealth for a Country

Monarchy was the form of government during Valluvar's period. There is no real difference between the country's wealth and the king's wealth in a monarchy. The wealth of a country includes its natural resources, the taxes collected from people, the revenue from the customs, and the wealth of the defeated enemies (kural – 756). It should be noted that Valluvar never advocates war to annex another country or take over the wealth of another country. However, Valluvar is not against defending one's country when attacked. So, when a king emerges victorious in a war by defending his country, the wealth of the defeated country rightfully belongs to him.

Valluvar's statements regarding the king and his wealth are equally applicable to any form of government. In the case of democracies, though the wealth of a country theoretically belongs to its citizens, it is the country's government that makes the decisions and manages the wealth. It has the same responsibilities as the king in a monarchy. Like an individual who is committed to supporting his family and others in need, the king or the government also has social responsibilities to take care of the citizens who need help. Therefore, a government should also accumulate wealth to arrange for the proper distribution of its wealth to needy people.

Need for Righteousness in Accumulating Wealth

In addition to emphasizing the importance of wealth, Valluvar also elaborates on how one should accumulate one's wealth. According to Valluvar, righteousness should be the means for all human endeavors, and wealth accumulation is no exception. He says, "The wealth acquired in the right way is a source of virtue and pleasure (kural - 754)." He insists that one should turn away from unjust gains the same day it accrues, even if it can be put to good use (kural – 113).

The concept of accumulating wealth by righteous means is also equally applicable to a country. Although Valluvar emphasizes the importance of a king generating and accumulating wealth, he also cautions the king against excessive taxation, which might cause hardship to his citizens. He says, "Extracting excessive amounts of money from the citizens by way of heavy taxation is like armed robbery (Kural – 552)". Also, he warns that there is no weapon more powerful to destroy the riches of a king than the tears of the oppressed citizens who are unable to bear their sufferings (Kural – 555). The French Revolution and the Russian Revolution are examples of people protesting against the tyrannical rule of the despotic monarchs. Even in democracies, it is not unusual for people to rise against and overthrow their governments when they are subjected to oppressive and unjust taxation. Valluvar considers excessive taxation as a form of tyranny. According to him, just and a reasonable amount of taxes collected in a righteous manner is the right way for the government to accumulate wealth. Just like the individual citizens, governments are also expected to follow the path of righteousness in accumulating wealth.

Distribution of Individual's Wealth to Those Who Are in Need

The wealth acquired by an individual will undoubtedly be useful to support his family. But according to Valluvar, the wealth gained through hard work is also to help the deserving people (Kural – 212). In other words, the purpose of acquiring wealth is not only to support one's family, but it should also be used for charitable and philanthropic pursuits to help deserving people. To him, helping the poor without expecting a return is a genuine charity (kural – 221). Valluvar considers that not practicing charity is more miserable than death itself (kural -230).

In addition to helping and feeding the poor, he also suggests philanthropic ways to use one's wealth to help deserving people. He suggests three models of philanthropy. The first model is the "Fresh Water Lake Model." Here, "The wealth of a man of eminent knowledge who loves the world and wants to exercise benevolence is like a lake with fresh drinking water (kural – 215)." In other words, his wealth will provide a perennial supply of benefits to needy people like a lake with drinking water, which supplies water to all the people all the time. This type of philanthropy offers the maximum benefit to a large number of people for a very long time. For example, modern philanthropic foundations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, McArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, and other such large foundations have vast sums of money in the bank, and the interest obtained from the principal is used to benefit those who seek assistance. Since the principal is never used, this type of foundations can provide help to a large number of people for a very long time.

Next is the "Fruit Tree Model." In this case, "The wealth of a very benevolent philanthropist is like a fruit tree in the middle of a town (Kural – 216)." The fruit tree supplies fruits to a relatively large number of people for a specific period. When the fruit season is over, those who need the fruit from the tree will have to wait till the following season. Practitioners of this type of philanthropy provide help when there is money, and when there is no money, they wait until more funds are available. Examples of this type of philanthropy would include modern philanthropic organizations like the United Way, Red Cross, and other organizations that depend upon donations from the donors and provide benefits as long as funds are available and wait until more funds are available to provide additional services.

The last model suggested by Valluvar is the "Medicinal Tree Model." "The wealth of a philanthropist who is a truly magnanimous person is like a medicinal tree (Kural – 217)." In the case of a medicinal tree in which every part of the tree, including its roots, bark, flowers, fruits, seeds, and leaves, are useful for medicinal purposes, people would harvest all parts of the tree, and the tree would not survive for a long time. Similarly, the truly magnanimous philanthropist would distribute all his wealth until there is nothing left to give. This type of philanthropy is like the "Spend Down Foundations" in the USA. In a Spend Down Foundation, all the assets are spent for the intended purposes, and once the assets are depleted, then there is nothing more to give.

Although the three models described above deal with the philanthropic patterns of the rich, Valluvar does not limit philanthropy to the rich. In fact, he believes that it is everyone's duty to be aware of their social responsibility and should feel the need to share whatever they have with the deserving people in need. To be specific, he says,

Even if benevolence would result in one's ruin, it is worth securing that ruin
by selling oneself, if necessary. (Kural – 220)

According to Valluvar, there is nothing better than philanthropy in this world or heaven (Kural – 213). Valluvar mentions charity and philanthropy as possible ways of helping those in need. He believes relieving people of their devastating hunger is the real investment of one's wealth (Kural – 226). It is clear that Valluvar considers that the purpose of accumulating wealth is to distribute it to the deserving people. One can see the similarity between Valluvar's idea of accumulation and distribution of wealth with that of the concept of Trusteeship proposed by Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi stated that wealthy people should consider their wealth as a trust intended to alleviate the poverty and sufferings in the community and seek ways to help others with their wealth.

Distribution of Government's Wealth from the Standpoint of a Country

Valluvar states, "A king should be able to generate wealth, develop and guard it and distribute the wealth to various projects (Kural – 385). As seen from the following kural, according to Valluvar, helping the poor and rewarding the scholars and artists for their accomplishments are among the projects for which a king should spend his wealth.

Unfailing courage, charity, wisdom, and zeal are the required
qualities for a king. (Kural – 385)

He is the beacon among kings who has these four qualities: beneficence,
benevolence, rectitude, and concern for the citizens. (kural - 390)

Whatever Valluvar says about a king is equally applicable to the governments of modern democracies. The governments are responsible for the welfare of the people. Therefore, allocating and using the available funds for the people's welfare should be the high priority for the governments.

Conclusion

In summary, wealth is essential both for individuals and for the governments in this world. However, it must be acquired by the right means, and it should be used for helping those who need help. If individuals share their resources with deserving others through charity and philanthropy, there will be harmony in the community. Also, if a government is mindful of the poor people's sufferings and helps them through welfare

programs, it will reduce poverty and improve the quality of life for the people in the country. Therefore, Valluvar emphasizes the importance of charity, philanthropy, and compassion towards people who need help.

“TIRUKKURAL-*An Abridgement of Sastras* “ by Dr.R.Nagaswamy

---Misunderstanding or Mischievous Misinterpretation?

-----Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar

The languages belonging to Dravidian Family, Indo-European Family, Austric Family and Sino Tibetan Family are prevalent in India. Here in this essay I do not wish to present elaborate explanation of the language groups. One thing to be noted here is that the Dravidian languages are the indigenous languages and Indo-Aryan languages are alien to this country, before they entered here. In the pre-Aryan period Dravidian languages were prevalent in the north The Indus valley civilization which is proved by renowned historians as exclusively Dravidian and Dravidian languages prevalent in north (Brahui in Pakistan and Dhangar, a dialect of Kurukh, in Nepal) are solid evidences for the prevalence of Dravidian languages throughout India before the entry of Indo-Aryan languages.

The repeated propaganda that Aryan culture and Aryan language (Sanskrit) are the most ancient treasures of India and every other culture and language was barbaric is a malicious design of neo-Aryan activists. The research of MaxMullar, a hasty generalization of irrelevant facts and the ignorance of western scholars about Dravidian antiquity acted as a strong base for such deviation from the factual reality.

When the government of India declared Tamil as a classical language the neo-Aryan activists considered it as a fatal blow for their pseudo-intellectual pursuits and malicious propaganda. Several voluminous books were published by various scholars to glorify the superiority of Sanskrit and insist that the Dravidian languages got their grammar, vocabulary and literature from Sanskrit. The onslaught on the uniqueness of the Dravidian grandeur was attempted from many countries.

Herman Tieken and Sheldon Pollock were notably notorious for their disreputable books which were distortions of well proved findings on the primary classical features of Tamil. Here in this essay I wish to just point out the intellectual mischief of Dr.Nagaswamy who always finds immense pleasure in boasting the ‘supremacy’ of Sanskrit and the ‘indebtedness’ of Tamil language and culture for the ‘contribution’ of Vedas and Sanskrit to Tamil.

In his book titled “Mirror of Tamil and Sanskrit” Dr.Nagaswamy has presented a bundle of lies, distorted presentation of Tamil literary theories and proud proclamation of the superiority of Sanskrit and a conclusion that Tamil is indebted to Sanskrit for its vocabulary, grammar and literature.

In his preface to the book, he boldly asserts that the ‘five-fold division of Tamil life (as *kurinji, mullai, marutham neithal and palai*)’ is Aryan as it is described in Bharatha’s Natya sashtra. The Tamil marriage system is adopted one borrowed from the eight-fold marriage system formulated by Brahmins. The Tamil alphabet is a borrowed one from Brahmi, which is invented by Brahmins.

I do not wish to delve deep in a vast ocean of research works which clearly prove that all these assertions are misconceptions based on a biased view. Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar, who had translated the classical treatise on Tamil grammar, Tholkappiyam, had stated in his research that “Tamil characters were not borrowed from Sanskrit. Tamil was committed to writing before the arrival of Brahmins.” is the fact clearly expressed and substantiated in his research.(Tholkappiyam in English with critical studies-p279)If you have at least a cursory reading of Ilakkuvanar’s book you will come to the conclusion that Nagaswamy wishes to present a false picture of Tamil culture and literature. The Tamils have no Alphabet, grammar, literature, marriage system and they were either borrowed from Sanskrit or voluntarily contributed by Brahmin rishis with a noble motive to enrich Tamil.(?)

This under-estimate of Tamil by Nagaswamy is based on a firm conviction that Tamil is a *neecha-bhasha*” (language of the vulgar kind of people) i.e.sudras who belong to the lowest category of the Varna system. In his book titled “TIRUKKURAL-*An Abridgement of Sastras* “Dr.R.Nagaswamy has wonderfully performed a revolution (!) as per his statement in his preface to this book.

”*Tirukkural*, by sage Thiruvalluvar is studied from a new revolutionary angle, citing extensively, from Sanskrit *Dharma sastras, Artha sastra, Natya sastra and Kama sutra* as a derivative book of Hindu Vedic tradition.”(p.6)

This sweeping statement of Dr.Nagaswamy clearly reveals, he had not studied any of the books as an extensive and elaborate reading of these books will make one understand that Thirukkural is quite different from the Sanskrit books.

A renowned philosopher, Dr. Albert Schweitzer had studied all the sastras, Brahmanas, smritis, Upanishads and Vedas as an ardent reader with a dedicated spirit to learn Indian philosophy. In his book titled” Indian Thought and its development” he gives a clear picture about the difference between Thirukkural and Sanskrit sastras.

“In the famous ancient Book of the Laws of Manu (Manu-Smrti) we find Brahmanic world-view applied to ordinary life. Manu is the divine Primeval Father of the human race. The Brahmin-divinity is said to have revealed to him the laws valid for individuals and for society, and his son Bhrgu communicated them to human beings.

Manu’s Law Book originated somewhere between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. But it certainly contains matter that belongs to a much earlier period. The six first sections of the work treat of the creation of the world and the order of Brahmins, the seventh of the king and his duties, the eighth and ninth of the laws, the tenth of castes and semi-castes, the eleventh of acts of atonement, the twelfth of reincarnation and redemption. “(Indian Thought and its development by Albert Schweitzer Chapter XI Brahmanic World-view in the laws of Manu p.166)

Dr.Schweitzer elucidates the essence of Manava dharma sastra in apt words appropriately.“ According to this book the Brahmins are appointed by the Brahman-divinity lords over all that the world contains. They are to be venerated as god-like beings. A Brahmin at ten years old must be as much respected as if he were the father of a hundred-year-old member of the warrior class. And even if a Brahmin has committed

every kind of crime, he may not be condemned to death, but only to banishment. The worst sin that a man can load upon himself is the murder of a Brahmin. He must expiate it with death and will be born again as a savage beast. Anyone who seizes a Brahmin by the hair is to have his hands cut off ; anyone who steals a cow from a Brahmin shall have one foot mutilated. If a man dies without leaving natural heirs, his property shall go to the Brahmins. If a Brahmin finds buried treasure, it belongs to him in its entirety; if the King finds such, he must share it with the Brahmins. By his deferential behavior to a Brahmin, a member of a lower caste can attain to reincarnation in a higher.”

Dr.Schweitzer reveals the fact that Manava dharma sastra acts as a constitution for ‘a government of the Brahmins, by the Brahmins and for the Brahmins.”

While Manu dharma upholds the division of man by his caste and discriminates men by their birth, Thirukkural wishes to unite the humankind and propagates social justice.

With the following description of Thirukkural explaining its universality I wish to conclude:

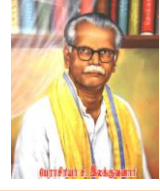
“The distinction between man and man is based mainly on the difference of religion or color or nation. But there are no natural or physiological differences and distinction. The distinction of color is the result of different climate conditions. Such distinctions as these are, negation of the fundamental underlying unity between man and man. Kural code bases its principles on this unity and entire human race for common good, benefit and welfare. It teaches universal brotherhood, brother-hood of man and fatherhood of god.

Kural code is not confined to any country, race or religion. It is based on the principle of world citizen ship and world state. Any man is a citizen of the world and belongs to the world and the world belongs to him. It offers solution to the individual as well as to world problems, solutions to the political, social, economic, racial problems from which the world is suffering. Its outlook is the broadest. Kural is far above the religious level. Book of each religion is intended for those who owe allegiance to it; it extols that religion at the cost of others. Kural does not suffer from such limitation of religion; it teaches ethical life for the entire mankind. The value of Kural Neri is incomparably supreme, unequalled and unparalleled. Kural code is the message of Tamilian race conveying the principle of universal brotherhood to the rest of the world, contains the essence of Tamilian culture. It conveys a message of love to the world.”(Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar, KuralNeri: English Fortnightly-15/02/1966)

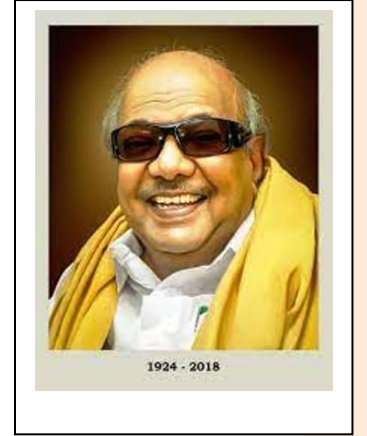
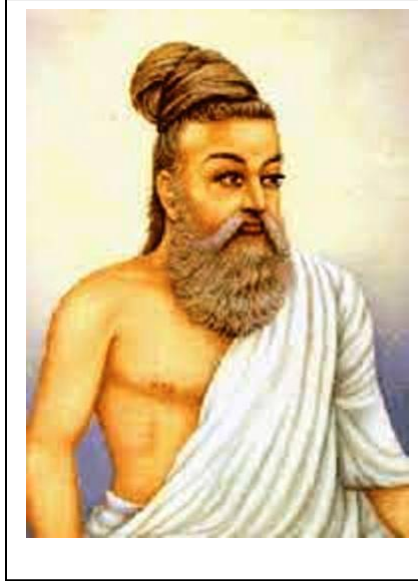
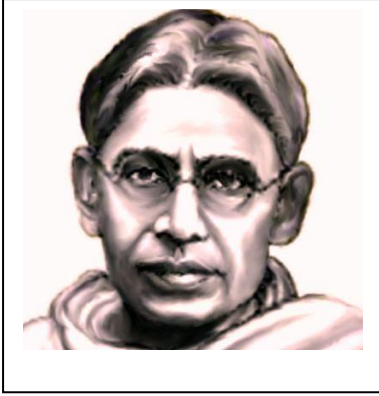


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Tamil New Year and Thiruvalluvar Day

In 1935, a group of Tamil scholars led by Maraimalai Adigal, one of the pioneers of the Tamil renaissance movement, declared that there was sufficient literary evidence in ancient Sangam-era texts such as Nattrinai, Ainkurunuru and Tholkappiyam to observe the New Year at the start of the Tamil month of Thai. The Dravidian poet-writer Bharathidasan, through this song, admonished Tamils who were celebrating the new year in Chithirai month as those living in complete darkness.

Over 500 persons, scholars and Tamil enthusiasts, under the leadership of scholar and founder of 'Thani Tamil Iyakkam', Thiru Maraimalai Adigal, met at Pachaiyappa's College in Chennai and decided that Tamils needed a separate calendar. It was proposed that a new calendar in the name of Saint Thiruvalluvar be created, and that be declared as the 'Tamil Year'.

At the conference, they also reportedly determined that the birth year of Thiruvalluvar was 31 BC. There was also a consensus among the Tamil Scholars that the first day of the month of Thai should be the first day of the Tamil year.



Maraimalai adigal and Tamil scholars
at the meeting-18 & 19th May 1935



Prof.Kaverippaakkam Namachivayar (The
convener of the meeting) with Maraimalai

Later in 1939, All India Tamilar Conference was held in Tiruchi presided by Somasundara Bharatiyar in which Thanthai Periyar, Karandhai Tamil Sangam President Umamaheswaranar, Prof. K. Subramaniam, T.P.Meenakshisundaram, Thiru.Vi.Ka., Maraimalai Adigal, P.T.Rajan, Arcot Ramaswami Mudaliar, Bharathidasan, Pattukottai Alagiri and many others participated. That meet also decided that first day of Thai is Tamil New Year Day.

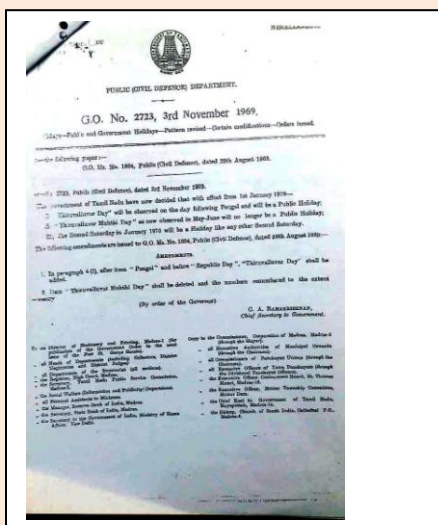
Their reasoning was two-fold: One, that the traditional system is based on the Sanskritic (read Brahminical) system, and two, that Tamil literature points out to Thai being the beginning of the New Year for Tamil.

While it had been a long-standing demand by many, including the DMK, to change the official date, it was only in 2008 when Karunanidhi was able to achieve it.

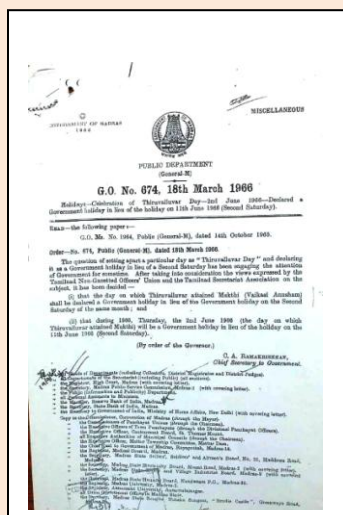
There was, however, a strong backlash to it. While Karunanidhi refused to roll back his decision, he announced that April 14 will continue to be celebrated as 'Chitirai thirunal'.

But as soon as Jeyalalitha came to power in 2011, she rolled back the decision, accusing DMK of being hurtful and disrespecting the sentiments of the people. So, the Tamil New Year, officially, continues to be April 14 now.

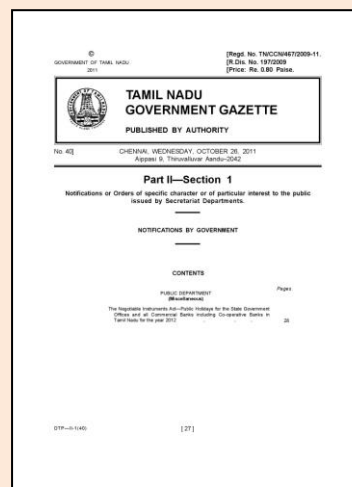
On 23 August 2011, months after J. Jeyalalitha was elected for her third term as chief minister, her government passed a resolution in the Tamil Nadu assembly to change the 'Tamil New Year' to 14 April. According to her standpoint, it coincides with the first day of the Tamil month 'Chithirai', and many other communities across India celebrate their new year on the same date. Jeyalalitha had stated then that the Tamil New Year was wrongly being celebrated on 14 January – the first day of the Tamil month 'Thai' – as legislated by the preceding Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government in 2008.



G.O.No.2723 3rd Nov.1969 Declaring
Thiruvalluvar Day on 2nd Thai



G.O.No.674, 18th March 1966
Thiruvalluvar Day on Vaikasi
Anusham



Tamilnadu Tamil New Year
(Declaration) Repeal Act 2011
Gazette –Oct 26 -2011

Jeyalalitha overturned many DMK projects. But, the change of the New Year date was significant. The debate for when the Tamil New Year should be celebrated goes into the core of the movement that laid the foundation for Dravidian political sub-nationalism and Tamil cultural renaissance.

Jeyalalitha never thought about the cultural values cherished by her predecessors in the Dravidian movement. The political adventurism of the cine artist, usurping very seniors in the party (like Navalar Nedunchezyan) of their leadership, gaining a mass support just by her cine-glamor, moved Tamilnadu to a dark age, detrimental to the Tamil culture, language and literature.

The sixty-year system advocated by her is quite alien to Tamil culture. For instance, this New Year is 'Bilava' while the next one will be 'Subakiruthu'. These years, '*samvatsara*', with Sanskritic names are derived from a myth involving Lord Krishna and sage *Narada*, who is transformed into a woman and gives birth to 60 sons. Each son is then given the reins to rule the world for one year, and that year is derived from the name of the son.

The Tamil reformists found this myth too hard to swallow and decided to come up with a more rational basis for their calendar. The birth of Tamil saint-poet Thiruvalluvar was estimated to be in 31 BC and that was adopted as the official start of the Tamil calendar. The DMK-led government had officially notified this to be the first Tamil calendar year in 1969. Successive AIADMK governments have not altered the Thiruvalluvar year calculation and the same is being followed to date.

Thiruvalluvar year is accepted without any denial by all the political parties, but the sixty-year system beginning with Tamil month Chiththirai is called as the Tamil year by the rivals of D.M.K who never accepted a substitute system for it.

Let us weigh the points:

Tamil New Year from Thai	Tamil New Year from Chiththirai
A whole-hearted decision of erstwhile and contemporary Tamil scholars dedicated to usher in a Tamil cultural renaissance	A routine procedure followed by astrologers and traditional almanac users.
Introduced to be followed by all the Tamils throughout the world.	Exclusively for the use of Hindus who speak Tamil while Hindus who speak other languages adopt separate year-systems.
Intended to build up a united Tamil society smashing the barriers of caste, creed and religion	It is an irony that Hindus living in Tamilnadu have separate year-systems as per their mother tongues.
Based on the history of Tamil literature and instituted in honor of the great poet-philosopher Thiruvalluvar, an icon of Tamil wisdom and an apostle of Humanism.	Based on a myth. No cultural significance.
Tamil New Year or Thiruvalluvar year system is highly useful in historical analysis and in compiling data chronologically.	As it is a sixty-year system it is neither useful in historical analysis nor helpful as a research-tool in compiling data.
As an ancient culture, we need this Thiruvalluvar year just like Christian era.	This sixty-year system is a borrowed one and the Sanskrit names used to denote the years have no connection to our cultural heritage.

In short, those who want self-respect, who feel proud of their Tamil ethnicity, who wish to see a Tamil renaissance should accept Thiruvalluvar year beginning with Thai. Those who never bother about their ancestral pride and cultural heritage may keep the Sanskrit year which is not ours. Those who imposed the Sanskrit based sixty-year rotation system kept us for many centuries under the clutches of Smritis and shruthis which advocated slavery for us. A miniscule minority ruled us by exploiting our beliefs and superstitions. If you still want the supremacy of our archrivals who wish to destroy our culture and language, in the name of spiritual values, you can continue to keep the Sanskrit based year system and other old procedures, letting down our rich heritage, many centuries older than that of Greece and Rome. Our future generations may point their finger towards you telling “Shame on you!”

EARLY ETHICS AND THE THIRUKKURAL

Dr. Xavier **THANINAYAGAM**



It is to Egypt that we have to go for the first pages of recorded ethics, and this takes us back from the second to the fourth millennia before Christ. The Kingdom of the Pharaohs, which arose on the banks of the Nile, was based on agriculture and commerce. Society was divided into classes at the head of which was the Pharaoh, followed by a powerful priesthood, a landed gentry, and slaves. There was a system of tenant-cultivation, and produce as taxes. Happiness in after-life was dependant on life on earth. In this environment, elementary notions of Justice, honesty, truthfulness, Loyalty grew. Most Egyptologists are, however, agreed that the Egyptians were not very highly developed in their ethical sense.

The ethical literature which developed among the Egyptians includes books of maxims and proverbs giving practical norms as how to conduct the business of life. These books which are probably the first known books of the world, were meant by men of affairs to instruct their sons or wards, and were subsequently used as textbooks for the education of the young. Students had to copy these textbooks, and hence several of these copy-books, papyri have been preserved. One of these is the **Instruction of Ptahhotep**, a great Vizier, (fl. 2675 or 2870 B.C.), who wrote down, in his old age, instructions for his son so that he might be trained as his assistant, and in course of time, his successor. Among the many aphorisms and maxims he says:-

It is a craftsman who speaks in council, and speech is more difficult than any craft.

Make righteousness flourish, and thy children shall live.

Established is the man whose standard is righteousness, who walketh according to his way.

In another book **Instruction for King Merikere** (2300 B.C.) it is said:

Truth comes to him well-brewed, after the manner of the ancestors. Imitate thy fathers, thy ancestors.....for lo! Their words abide in writing.

The **Proverbs of Amenemope**, written about 1000 B.C., are the first collection of proverbs in the world. Among those are found:

Better are loves when the heart is joyous than riches in unhappiness.

Take not gifts from the strong; neither shall thou oppress the weak.

A number of the maxims in the Thirukkural are similar, but the Thirukkural shows a great advance on Egyptian ethics. The Egyptians did not have abstract ethical terms like Justice, generosity, loyalty, for they thought in terms of the individual and the concrete. They did not say “I walk”, but “my legs walk”. Their word for **Right is Right direction**. Instead of the word “**ikai**”

(சகை-generosity) they would express “to give bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to those who have no clothes”-very much like the Hebrew writers.

Among the Greeks, ethical consciousness grew gradually. In the early stages of Greek culture, as represented in the epics, it is through notions of **customary morality** that notions of honour, fidelity and service are portrayed. The development is not unlike the development in the Sangam poems, where notions like honour (puhal), self-respect (manam), right and justice (aram), prevalent among a warrior society lead to even more abstract considerations. But from customary morality, Greek ethics develops into conscious and rational morality with Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. This rational morality is the stage at which we are able to compare the **Thirukkural** with Greek ethics, as represented in their philosophers and their gnomic poets.

In comparing the **Thirukkural** with the thought of the Greek philosophers, it should be noted that we are comparing condensed book of maxims or sutrams with works whose style is diffuse. Leisurely, and lengthy, works in which opinions are discussed elaborately and in detail with illustrations from life and history. For instance, Plato deals with the state in many of his dialogues, but especially in his **Republic** and in his **Laws**. But the **Thirukkural** deals with the State in about 600 couplets or 1200 lines. What is remarkable is that the **Thirukkural** contains the quintessence of that level of thought and supposes an ethical temper and age, in no way inferior to those represented by the Greek philosophers. Tamil society at the **Thirukkural** period was as ethically conscious and cultivated as Greek society in the fourth century B. C. Similarly, the Roman Stoics are conscious, to an exaggerated degree, about loss and wastage of time, for death comes, after which no man can work. In a book of maxims, such leisurely and dithyrambic disquisitions on the fleeting nature of existence and the wastage of time are not possible. Valluvar can afford to clinch the same argument in one phrase-

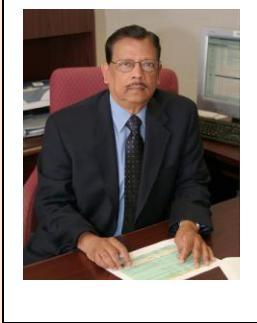
வீழ்நாட்டபடா அமை நன்றாற்றின் or அன்றறிவாம் என்னுது அறஞ்செய்க.

Ethics which had been earlier treated as a part of politics was given a separate place by Aristotle in his book on **Ethics** called Nicomachean Ethics, from his son Nicomachus. For whom it was written. The theme of Aristotle's Ethics is happiness defined as the active exercise of the mind in perfect conformity with goodness or virtue. The sophists held that morality was merely for the convenience of society and that a thinking man could have his own standards and follow his own pleasure and interests. The rational pleasure derived from one's activity is great happiness, second only to **contemplation** in Aristotle. This emphasis on contemplation is absent in Thirukkural. Being a book of practical ethics and proceeding from a rational plane, except for the introductory verses, and the chapters on asceticism, the rest of the book seems to be humanistic. But the rational happiness is expressed in the Thirukkural by the words இனிது, உவப்பு, இன்னுது, இன்பம், which occur so often. The rational pleasure is different from the sentient pleasure in other verses, as when one hears one's children's speech, or feels their physical touch. Aristotle defines pleasure and pain to consist in the "consciousness, by means of the discriminating faculty of the senses, of coming in contact with good or evil". He conceived the moral sense as analogous to the faculty for appreciating music, which may be more in some persons and less in others and which is capable of being developed. In using the terms இனிது, இன்னுது, இன்பம், how well has Thirukkural shown the rational pleasure arising from virtue and learning! A good man, says Aristotle, is pleased at good actions, as a musical man is pleased at good musical tunes. Inbam is the result of Aram and Porul in Thirukkural. All others, wealth etc., help the attainment of Inbam.

In the delineation of virtue, Aristotle chooses the principle of the mean, probably influenced by the "nothing in excess" ideal of the Greeks. What is the virtue of Liberality? It is the mean between prodigality and avarice. What is the virtue of Courage? It is neither rashness nor cowardice, but lies between the two. The moralist, in drawing the beauty of virtue and the results of virtue, finds it easier to define virtue as well as to exhort to virtuous action if he can also outline the opposed vices and defects. The Thirukkural makes use of this method, as does Aristotle. The Thirukkural reflects on Education as well as on Ignorance; on Righteous Rule as well as on Unrighteous Rule; on Friendship, on Wealth as well as Poverty, on Perfection as well

as on Baseness. But there is a difference between Aristotle and Valluvar. Aristotle has been criticized for his concept of virtue, in that he seems to place it in the centre between two extremes, whereas virtue should always be the highest perfection, and therefore an extreme. Particularly strong was Kant in his criticism of Aristotle, saying that he reduced of Aristotle, saying that he reduced the difference between vice and virtue to a mere quantitative difference. But the **Thirukkural** does not give room for any such observation, because it inculcates the highest living ethics possible in every aspect of life, without the imposition of any moderating or limiting notion in the concept of virtue.

Valluvar on Avoiding Violence



Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Bel Air, Maryland

Introduction

Generally, violence is defined as the use of physical force to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy another living being. In fact, violence is much more complicated than that. The definition of violence given by the Old Testament Scholar Professor Terence Fretheim seems more appropriate and comprehensive. He says that violence may be defined as follows: any action, verbal or nonverbal, oral, or written, physical, or psychical, active or passive, public or private, individual or institutional/societal, human or divine, in whatever degree of intensity, that abuses, violates, injures or kills. Since violence implies a multitude of actions caused by words and deeds, it is difficult to know which actions should be avoided.

Avoiding violence towards other human beings

Consistent with Professor Terrence Fretheim's definition, violence against other human beings would include verbal as well as physical violence. Verbal violence refers to the use of harsh and unkind words, slander, and lies that offend and hurt another human being's feelings. Physical violence would include any kind of physical attack which may cause pain, injury, or death to another person. Valluvar condemns verbal as well as physical violence. According to him, one should avoid any type of violence through the use of words or deeds.

There is a rule known as the **Golden Rule**, also referred to as the Law of Reciprocity. It refers to the principle of treating others as one would like to be treated. It is a maxim that is found in many religions and cultures. The Golden Rule is often attributed to the Chinese

philosopher Confucius (551 BC – 479 BC). This Golden Rule has two versions. One is the positive version, and the other is the negative version. The positive version of the Golden Rule states, “Do unto others what you would want others to do unto you.” The negative version states, “Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you.” The positive version stresses what a compassionate person should do, and the negative version emphasizes the actions one should avoid. Valluvar has a simple and elegant form of the negative version of the Golden Rule, which can provide guidance as to what actions should be avoided.

What one has realized as causing pain to oneself,
one should not inflict on others.

(Kural - 316)

He expresses a similar idea in another kural, where he asks, “Why does a man inflict upon other living beings those things he found harmful to himself (Kural - 318)? “

Valluvar has another profound idea about what to do with those who harm us. He says that if someone has harmed you or hurt you somehow or the other, then the best thing to do is to return good for evil. That is, do something good for someone who did evil so that he will be vexed at his own actions. The relevant kural is as follows:

The best punishment for those who do evil to you is to shame them by returning good for evil and after doing good in return, just forget the evil that was done to you as well as the good deed you did.

(Kural – 314)

In another context, where he describes the qualities of a man of perfection, Valluvar questions the value of perfection of character, by asking “Of what use is the perfection of character if it does not do good unto those who did evil (Kural - 987)?

Doing good in return for evil is very difficult for most people. If someone does good in return for evil and continues to harp on the evil deed that was done to him and the good deed he did, then the person who did the evil deed might feel humiliated, and the purpose of doing

the good deed will be lost. That is why Valluvar says that the evil deed, as well as the good deed, must be forgotten.

In a way, Valluvar's idea that evil deeds should be reciprocated with good deeds is somewhat similar to the statement in the Bible which says, "You resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other (King James 2000 Bible, Luke 6:29)." The dictum in Kural 314 is far more profound than the statement from the Bible or the Golden Rule. Therefore, it is apt to refer to kural 314 as the Platinum Rule of Valluvar.

Valluvar is cognizant of the fact that the world has all kinds of people with different levels of intelligence and other values. He wants to appeal to all his readers to avoid violence. Therefore, he puts forth various arguments in order to convince his readers to avoid violence at all costs. He challenges his readers' intelligence by asking them, "What benefit does someone derive from his intelligence if he does not treat others' suffering as his own (Kural – 315)?"

Valluvar appeals to his readers' innate good nature and says that virtuous people will not venture into violent behavior. According to him, violent behavior is not justified even if it would result in gaining riches and significant fame. Even if someone has caused great harm out of anger and malice, people of virtue will not harm others.

Even if it would yield great wealth and the attendant prestige, men of virtue will not harm others. (Kural - 311)

Even if someone harms them out of malice, men of virtue will not retaliate with harmful acts. (Kural - 312)

He tries to dissuade his readers by pointing out the dangers of violence towards fellow human beings. He warns those who harm others that they will undoubtedly face similar consequences. Therefore, one who seeks happiness should not cause pain and suffering to others. He insists that even when someone causes harm to us when we have not provoked him,

we should refrain from causing harm to him because such acts on our part will bring about endless miseries to us.

If you harm others in the forenoon, harm will automatically come to you in the afternoon.

(Kural – 319)

All the pain in the world rebounds on the one who caused it. Therefore, one who seeks freedom from pain should not cause pain to others.

(Kural – 320)

Retaliation even upon him who harms you when there was no provocation on your part will bring about endless miseries.

(Kural – 313)

In an ideal society, violence will have no place. But, human society has never been ideal, and perhaps it never will be. Philosophers like Valluvar try to guide society with the hope of achieving the goal of universal peace, harmony, and prosperity. In order to achieve such a goal, Valluvar tries to guide the individuals rather than preaching to society as a whole. He feels that if individuals change, then society will change. He says that to be free from envy, anger, greed, and the tendency to use harsh words constitute virtue (Kural – 35). In another Kural, he says that the real virtue is having a mind that is pure (Kural -34). Violence has its roots in anger, envy, and other blemishes of the mind. Therefore, Valluvar emphasizes the importance of never having a harmful thought and maintaining the purity of mind so that there will be no chance of violence due to words or deeds.

It is the supreme virtue not to have a harmful thought about anybody in any degree at any moment.

(kural - 317)

These ideas of Valluvar regarding nonviolence have had a significant impact on people like Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi. In 1908, the famous Russian Novelist, Leo Tolstoy wrote a letter to the Editor of Free Hindustan, an Indian newspaper. In that letter, he had mentioned

that he admired Valluvar's ideas on nonviolence and had quoted six kurals (kurals 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, and 319) from the Chapter on Avoiding Violence from the Kural (Chapter 32). A few months later, Mahatma Gandhi happened to read that letter. Gandhi appreciated Tolstoy's remarks about the Kural, and he translated that letter into the Gujarathi language and published it. It is said that Gandhi was so impressed by the Kural that he wanted to learn Tamil so that he could read the Kural in the original language in which it was written. Obviously, Gandhi was impressed with the ideas of Valluvar regarding nonviolence, and he adopted them and took them to a different level. Gandhi used the idea of nonviolence as a tool in his successful freedom fight against British rule in India. Later, Martin Luther King, the American Civil Rights activist, adopted Gandhi's approach of nonviolence in his fight for equality for African Americans.

Avoiding violence to other life forms

All religions of the world forbid hurting or killing fellow human beings. However, they all have differing views with respect to hurting or killing other living beings. Among the three ancient religions of India, viz., Jainism, Buddhism, and the Vedic religion (the predecessor of Hinduism), Jainism has the most stringent restrictions against violence towards animals and plants. Jainism strictly prohibits its followers from eating meat or poultry, or fish. When the root vegetables like potato, yam, onion, garlic, etc., are extracted from the ground, the worms and other small insects are likely to be hurt. In order to avoid hurting them, Jainism requires its followers to refrain from eating all root vegetables. Jainism lays down several other restrictions for the monks so that they would not even inadvertently hurt any living being, including plants and trees. Buddhism has fewer restrictions regarding eating meat, poultry, or fish. The original version of Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, prohibits its followers from eating meat or poultry, or fish. The later version of Buddhism, the Hinayana Buddhism, states that one can eat meat (poultry or fish) if one does not kill the animal for the sake of eating. The Vedic religion had a mixed message about killing animals. While it emphasizes that nonviolence is the duty of all classes of people (*Manusmiriti* 10:63), it allowed the killing of animals for sacrificial purposes and allowed eating the meat of the sacrificed animals. *Manusmiriti* (5:27) says that the meat of

an animal can be eaten after it has been killed for sacrificial purposes. Also, according to *Manusmriti*, meat can be eaten when someone is in dire need of food. However, modern-day Hinduism condemns meat-eating. But the majority of Hindus regularly eat meat.

Jainism, Mahayana Buddhism, and modern-day Hinduism consider eating meat a sinful act that will produce adverse karmic effects upon those who do so. In other words, the non-vegetarians are likely to suffer in their next birth for committing the sin of eating meat during this birth. In some cases, non-vegetarian food is considered a hindrance to spiritual progress. Avoidance of killing the animals was not advocated out of love and compassion for the animals. It was out of the desire to seek a better life in the next birth and to make progress in the spiritual journey towards salvation.

Valluvar strongly condemns violence towards any living being. Unlike the religions, Valluvar's disapproval of violence towards animals is out of compassion towards them. He is critical of the stance of Hinayana Buddhism and the Vedic religion regarding meat-eating. As mentioned before, the latter-day Buddhists believed that one could eat the meat of animals killed by others. Valluvar comments that if nobody would buy meat to eat, then nobody would be selling meat (Kural – 256). In other words, butchering animals is to sell their meat to those who want to eat it. In general, it is the demand that creates the supply. Therefore, if there is no demand for meat, then there will be no killing of animals for their meat.

As already mentioned, *Manusmriti* states that animal sacrifices are allowed during prayers as oblations to gods, and it was permissible to eat the meat of the sacrificed animals. Valluvar criticizes this practice by saying, “Not killing and eating the meat of an animal is better than a thousand sacrificial offerings (Kural – 259)”. Valluvar's concern is compassion for the animals. He says, “Not killing is an act of compassion. Killing is an act of cruelty. Therefore, it makes no sense to eat the meat from such killings (kural – 254). He wonders, “How could one be considered compassionate if one fattens oneself from the meat of a fellow-creature (Kural –

251?)". He tries to discourage the meat eaters by saying, "Those who realize that meat is the carrion ulcer of an animal's body, should abstain from eating it (Kural – 257)."

Valluvar's compassion extends far beyond saving the animals from the meat-eaters. He considers that all life forms must be protected, and he is absolutely against killing any living being for any reason. He says, "Non-killing is the highest virtue; whereas, the killing will bring in its wake, all the evil (Kural – 321)." According to him, "The right path of life can be defined as the one which includes the virtue of non-killing (kural- 324)." In fact, Valluvar considers that non-killing alone is just not adequate. He is of the opinion that "Sharing your food and other resources to protect all lives is the best of all precepts in the books of the world (Kural – 322)."

Conclusion

If everyone has genuine love and compassion towards all living beings, then there will be no violence in this world.

THIRUVALLUVAR AND SHAKESPEARE

P.GUNASEKAR, B.A.B.T., LL.B.

Shakespeare gives a vivid picture about the short span of life his “Tempest” thus:

We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, our little life is rounded with a sleep

Thiruvalluvar says that Death is like sleep and life is just like waking up from the sleep.

In ‘As you like it,’ Shakespeare, with deep insight and distinct vision, shows the world as a stage.

“All the world is a stage and

All the men and women are merely players.”

In ‘Macbeth,’ he says:

“Life is but a walking shadow

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage a poor player

And then is heart no more; it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing”

(Macbeth)

The illustration of stage is seen in Kural but with a difference. Valluvar says that wealth is like the audience assembling to witness the performance on a stage. After the drama or a concert is over, the theatre will be empty. Shakespeare states that on the stage of the world each man plays many parts, his acts being Seven Ages. Thiruvalluvar establishes that each man has seven births.

In ‘Macbeth’ Shakespeare arrives at the conclusion that “there is no art to find the mind’s construction in the face.” In Valluvar’s opinion, face is a mirror which reflects the mind.

One should utilize the opportunity he gets. Then only he can come up in life. Shakespeare says in “Julius Caesar”

“There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune.”

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Thiruvalluvar points out that just as crane is waiting on the bank of a river or on the sea-shore for its prey, one must wait and seize the right opportunity at the right moment to win over a thing. "One should laugh at the obstacles; one should welcome difficulties and face them with smiles on the face and confidence in his heart." This is Valluvar's contention.

In 'Twelfth night', Shakespeare stresses this point:

"She sat like patience on a monument smiling at grief."

On heroism, Shakespeare has to say a lot. Among the many, let us taste a sample.

"Seeking the bubble reputation

Even in the cannon's mouth"

An identical truth is expressed in Thirukkural No, 775. Even at the edge of a spear or at the point of the sword, one should not twinkle his eye.

"Venus smiles not in a house of tears" so says Shakespeare in his 'Romeo and Juliet.' But, Valluvar mentions the smile of the lady earth. If a person idles away time and fritters away his energy without doing proper work, the Mother Earth will smile at him.

As regards jealousy Shakespeare mentions it as "a green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on" (Othello).

Valluvar condemns jealousy vehemently in the 17th section of his Arathuppal.

Among all attainable excellences there is none equal to that of being free from jealousy towards others. Jealousy, the sinner kills the good fortune and hurts the soul down to the hell fire.

Every human being is susceptible to sorrow and misery. Shakespeare in his 'Hamlet' says that "when sorrows come they come not single spies, but in battalions."

Like-wise Valluvar also refers to "Floods of troubles" in his Kural.

On Chastity, Shakespeare says a woman should be "as chaste as ice" in his 'Hamlet.' The passage dealing with chastity, in all's well that an end well is worthy to note.

*"My chastity is the jewel of our house
Bequeathed down from ancestors."*

Kurals 56 and 57 give the qualities of an ideal house-wife. "She is the good housewife who guards her virtue, reputation and chastity and tends her husband with loving care! A woman cannot be guarded by a prison. The chief guard of a woman is her chastity alone.

Shakespeare sets apart a major portion of his writings to love. There are many beautiful passages in his works on this great theme, while Thiruvalluvar has devoted one-third of his book to love. Nearly 250 maxims speak of earthly love.

Shakespeare describes that love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes being vexed, a sea nourished with lovers' tears. (Romeo & Juliet).

Valluvar also compares love with fire. Fire burns only when it is near. It has no power to hurt when you are far away. But love does.

Shakespeare utters a truth about lovers. In his 'Merchant of Veniece' he reveals thus:

"Love is blind and lovers cannot see the pretty follies that themselves commit."

It is said in Kural that a girl can see the follies and foibles committed by her lover only when he is away. When her beloved comes near she forgets all the mistakes committed by him. Valluvar pictures this truth by giving an example of the eyebrow pencil. If the pencil is kept away from the eye it will be visible. When it is brought near the eye it cannot be seen by the same eye.

In 'As you like it' Shakespeare says that "the sight of lovers feeds those in love". He further mentions in the same play that 'who ever loved that loved not at first sight.

Valluvar says that loves alone with look at each other as if they had not known each other (1099) when the eyes of both the lovers are devouring each other what useful purpose can the words serve? (1100).

Shakespeare describes the sweet kisses of the lovers in his romantic plays. Two relevant passages from Romeo and Juliet and Measure for measure are given below:-

"Take O take those lips away

That so sweetly were for sworn

And those eyes the break of day

Lights that do mislead the morn

But my kisses bring again, bring again

Seals of love but sealed in vain (Measure for Measure)

And steal immortal blessing from her lips

Who even in pure and vestal modesty

Still blush as thinking them own kisses sin (Romeo and Juliet)

Valluvar explains these “Seals of love?” as “the lips of the beloved are as sweet as a mixture expression of the immortal blessings of love.

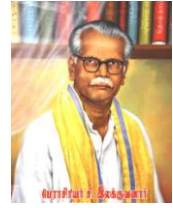
Thus we find the identity in thought, similarity of opinions and clarity in expression among the works of Valluvar and Shakespeare. A person with an inquisitive mind will find interesting material of immense value in Valluvar and Shakespeare. (KuralNeri-15/5/1966)



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Universal Aspects Found in Thirukkural: A Critical Study

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With an experience of more than twenty five years, she adores her institution with her vast knowledge and keen critical perspective. Her oration and dedication to teaching make her lectures quite interesting and highly informative. Her special interest is American literature. Her publication of research articles and books display her voracious reading and critical acumen. As a prolific writer and impressive lecturer she is an asset to her institution.

[Abstract: This paper is discusses about the Universal Aspects Found in Thirukkural. Tirukkural is praised for its universality across the globe. The ancient Tamil poet Avvaiyar observed, "Thiruvalluvar pierced an atom and injected seven seas into it and compressed it into what we have today as Kural." The Russian Philosopher Alexander Piatigorsky called it chef d' oeuvre of both Indian and world literature "due not only to the great artistic merits of the work, but also to the lofty humans ideas permeating it which are equally precious to the people all over the world of all periods and countries.]

Introduction

Valluvar is believed to have lived sometime between the 4th century BC and the 1st century BC. The Tami poet Mamulanar of the Sangam period mentioned that Thiruvalluvar was the greasted Tamil Scholar, contemporarily mentioning the Nanda Dynasty of northern region of India, which ruled during the 4th century BC, lasting between 345 and 321 BC. This estimate is based on linguistic analysis of his writings. However, there is no historical evidence for when and where he lived. With the exact date still under debate, taking the latest of the estimated dates, the Tamil Nadu government is using 31BC as the year of Valluvar. In this essay we shall examine the universal aspects of Thirukkural as a classical masterpiece.

Truths for All Religions:

Thiruvalluvar is thought to have belonged to either Jainism or Hinduism. This can be observed in his treatment of the concept of ahimsa or non-violence, which is the principal concept of both the religions. Valluvar's treatment of the chapters on vegetarianism and non-killing reflects the Jain precepts, where these are stringently enforced. The three parts that the Tirukkural is divided into, namely, aram (Virtue), porul (Wealth) and inbam (love), aim at attaining veedu (ultimate salvation). They follow, respectively, the four foundations of Hinduism, namely, dharma, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. His mentioning of God Vishnu in couplets 610 and 1103 and Goddess *Lakshmi* in couplets 167,408,519,565,568,616 and 617 suggests the vaishnavite beliefs of Valluvar. Other eastern beliefs of Valluvar found in the book include previous birth and re-birth, seven births, and some ancient Indian astrological concepts, among others. Despite using these contemporary religious concepts of his time, Valluvar has limited the usage of these terms to a metaphorical sense to explicate the fundamental virtues and ethics, without enforcing any of these religious beliefs in practice. This chiefly has made the treatise earn the title Ulaga Podhu Marai (the universal scripture).

Universality: The Tirukkural is praised for its universality across the globe. The ancient Tamil poet Avvaiyar observed, "Thiruvalluvar pierced an atom and injected seven seas into it and compressed it into what we have today as Kural." The Russian Philosopher Alexander Piatigorsky called it chef d'oeuvre of both Indian and world literature "due not only to the great artistic merits of the work, but also to the lofty human ideas permeating it which are equally precious to the people all over the world of all periods and countries." G.U. Pope called him "a bard of universal man." According to Albert Schweitzer, "there hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much of lofty wisdom." Leo Tolstoy was inspired by the concept of non-violence found in Tirukkural when he read a German version of the book, who in turn instilled the concept in Mahatma Gandhi through his 'A letter to a Hindu' when young Gandhi sought his guidance. Mahatma Gandhi, who took to studying Tirukkural in

prison, called it “a textbook of indispensable authority on moral life” and went on to say, “The maxims of valluvar have touched my soul. There is none who has given such a treasure of wisdom like him.” Sir A.C. Grant said, “Humility, charity and forgiveness of injuries, being Christian qualities, are not described by Aristotle. Now these three are everywhere forcibly inculcated by the Tamil Moralists” According to K.M. Munshi, “Thirukkural is a treatise par excellence on the art of living.” Sri Aurobindo stated, “Tirukkural is gnomic poetry, the greatest in planned conception and force of execution ever written in this kind.” Monsieur Ariel, who translated and published the third part of the Kural in French in 1848, called it “a masterpiece of Tamil literature, one of the highest and purest expressions of human thought.” According to Rev. Emmons E.White, “Tirukkural is a synthesis of the best moral teachings of the world.” Rajaji commented, “It is the gospel of love and a code of soul – luminous life. The whole of human aspiration is epitomized in this immortal book, a book for all ages.” Zakir Hussain, former president of India, said “Tirukkural is a treasure house of worldly knowledge, ethical guidance and spiritual wisdom” The structure of the book The Tirukkural is structured into 133 chapters, each containing 10 couplets (or Kurals), for a total of 1,330 couplets, the 133 chapters are grouped into three sections: 1. Aram (Dharma) dealing with virtue (Chapters 1-38) 2. Porul (Artha) Dealing with wealth or polity (Chapters 39-108) 3. Inbam (Kama) dealing with love (Chapter 109-133) Each Kural or couplet contains exactly seven words, known as cirs, with four cirs on the first line and three on the second. A cir is a single or a combination of more than one Tamil word. For example, *Tirukkural* is a cir formed by combining the two words *thiru* and *kural*. The section on virtue (Aram) contains 380 verses, wealth (Porul) has 700 and love (Inbam) has 250.

Seven ideals: The overall organization of the Kural text is based on seven ideals prescribed for a commoner besides observations of love

1. 40 couplets on God, rain ascetic, and virtue
2. 200 couplets on domestic virtue

3. 140 couplets on higher yet fundamental virtue based on grace, benevolence and compassion
4. 250 couplets on royalty
5. 100 couplets on ministers of state
6. 220 couplets on essential requirements of administration
7. 130 couplets on morality, both positive and negative
8. 250 couplets on human love and passion

Tone of the Book:

As the book forms part of secular ethics, Tirukkural expounds a secular, moral and practical attitude towards life. Quite contrary to all the religious texts, Tirukkural refrains from talking of hopes and promises of the other – worldly life. Instead, it preaches the ways of cultivating one's mind to gain the other worldly bliss in the present life itself. By occasionally referring to heavenly glory beyond the worldly life, Valluvar balances what can be achieved in human life with what may be got thereafter. Only in a couple of introductory chapter (Chapters 1 and 3) does Valluvar sound religious. Accordingly, he maintains a tone that could be acceptable to people of all faiths. The critics are of the opinion that Valluvar composed every chapter in response to a plea to write ten best couplets on a particular subject. Still, he rarely shows any concern as to what literary expressions he used earlier while writing on other subjects, in order to allow for some repetition and mild contradictions in ideas. Through he strikes the contradictory note from a purist point of view, Valluvar employs this method to stress the importance of the give en code of ethics.

Conclusion:

Although it has been widely acknowledged that Thiruvalluvar was of Jain origin and the Tirukkural in its most part was inspired from Jain;Hindu and other ancient Indian philosophies, owing to its universality and non – denominational nature, almost every religious group in India and across the world, including Christianity, has claimed the work for itself.

For example, G.U. Pope speaks of the book as an “echo of the Sermon on the Mount.” In the introduction to his English translation of the Kural, Pope even claims, “I cannot feel any hesitation in saying that the Christian Scriptures were among the sources from which the poet derived his inspiration”. However, the chapters on the ethics of vegetarianism (Chapter 26) and non-killing (Chapter 33), which the Kural emphasizes unambiguously unlike religious texts, suggest that the ethics of the Kural is rather a reflection of the Jaina moral code than that of Christian ethic. [Journal of Advances in Library and Information Science, Vol.8, No 3.July-September 2019, pp-94-96]

THIRUVALLUVAR’S OBSERVATION ON NATURE: A STUDY ON THE CLASSICAL TAMIL TEXT *THIRUKKURAL*

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Kalaiarasan’s key proficiency in English Language Teaching made him a teaching faculty. He has produced 5 M.Phil Scholars and 3 Ph.D. Scholars under his guidance. In 2015, Kalaiarasan earned a Ph.D. in Government Arts College, Udhagamandalam from Bharathiar University. Even though he is teaching the English language, he is a bibliophile of classical Tamil Literature.. He feels that *Thirukkural* is quite easy to understand when compared to other ancient Tamil literature and it is the best for students and all living beings. He, with a special lasting, encourages his daughter Kavinya Kalaiarasan to study *Thirukkural* as a daily devotion to discover blessings from *Thirukkural*. He has been teaching and motivating his students to read *Thirukkural* and to discover the eternal truth and heavenly connection. This motivates him to find out the natural elements in *Thirukkural*. He is an active member of Research Gate and the article on *Thirukkural* crossed more than 13000 reads.

[Abstract :Thiruvalluvar was the foremost thinker of nature among the prominent classical Tamil poets. He not only wrote about morality but also various themes subjects. He lived with the nature which portrayed in his works. His famous work *Thirukkural* is applicable for all the time and people. Most of the researches in Tamil show how he is associated with nature and the present paper is an attempt to show about his keen observation on the nature.]

Thiruvalluvar

Thiruvalluvar, a classical and celebrated Tamil poet, was probably born between 4th and 1st century BC. Government of Tamilnadu has approved that he was born in 31 BC. at Thirumayilai (Presently Mylapore, Chennai). The estimation of his works’ linguistic analysis says that Valluvar had lived during Sangam Period. His works are based on common ethics and morality ideas to the society. There are many legends about him and his wife, Vasuki

Ammaiyar. It is believed that he also lived some times in Madurai under the Pandiya rulers where many Tamil poets grew. Recently Kanyakumari Historical and Cultural Research Centre (KHCRC) claimed that Valluvar was a king of Valluvanadu in the hilly tracts of the Kanyakumari (*Valluvar Lived in Kanyakumari District*, By Chennai Online News Service, Tuesday April 26, 11:15 PM).

Thirukkural

“A careful reading of Thirukkural couplets reveals that author Thiruvalluvar was a keen observer of nature” (Gopalkrishna Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal, SACON).

Thirukkural is a famous Tamil Literature. *Thirukkural* is a pair of Tamil words ‘thiru’ means beautiful and ‘kural’ a short poem consisting of two lines, a couplet. The Kural consists 133 chapters consisting 10 couplets in each for a total of 1330 couplets. Its original title is *Muppāl* and divided into three parts, Book of Virtue (*Arattuppāl*), Book of Polity (*Poruṭpāl*) and Book of Love (*Kāmatuppāl*). On Thirukkural, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam says, "Thirukkural is considered to provide the code of conduct for the humanity of the planet earth for all time, which makes the past meet the present and creates the future." It is considered ‘Common Creed’ and it is a guide for human morals and betterment in life of the World. Emmons E. White, a Christian missionary in South India, says, "Thirukkural is a synthesis of the best moral teachings of the world."

Ecosystem

One must understand that the world is not created for human alone but also for non-human beings, such as trees, insects, birds, animals and others. Most of the wise people advised that we have to protect nature in order to live. The word ecology is derived from the Greek word, οἶκος, "house", or "environment. Many researches have been focusing on ecosystem and environmental studies.

Valluvar and Environment

Thiruvalluvar has expressed that the world is common and shared by human and non-human beings in his couplets. He said “Let those that need partake your meal; guard everything that lives” (322) which means the partaking of food that has been shared with others people, birds and animals. It is the prime duty of every one that we have to protect other creatures also. He has used a number of ecosystem from the surroundings of Tamilnadu. He has used the elements of nature for comparison to teach reality and morality.

Water

Valluvar had beautifully explained about the importance of nature 2000 year ago. He articulated four important fortifications of a nation.

Fort is wealth to those who act against their foes;

Is wealth to them who, fearing, guard themselves from woes (*Kural*, 742)

He said that the everlasting water with crystal clear was a water port, an open space/ plains was a land port, a larger hill was a mountain port and beautiful and cool shady forest was a forest port. These four elements of nature were really a fort for any country.

He then articulated the importance and need of water resources.

If clouds restrain their gifts and grant no rain,

The treasures fail in ocean's wide domain. (17)

If the clouds failed to give water which was taken from the wide sea, then the wealth of the sea will be diminished. In another couplet, he said that without rain, there cannot be the flowing of water and the same time, the duties of every man's life cannot be discharged by any person without water. So when rain fails, man also fails in 'duty's ordered way'.

When water fails, functions of nature cease, you say;

Thus when rain fails, no men can walk in 'duty's ordered way' (20)

Birds

Valluvar's keen observations of the birds were presented in his couplets. In the couplet, 481, he said, "A crow will conquer owl in broad daylight"(481). It means that a crow would overcome an owl which was more powerful than it in the day time. Through this he advised the kings to wait for the suitable time to attack his enemies. He described about a maiden's delicate feet, which was most softer than the feathers of the swan, "the down on the swan's breast"(1120).

As heron stands with folded wing, so wait in waiting hour;

As heron snaps its prey, when fortune smiles, put forth your power. (490)

Everyone must possess self control or should use it in the right time, like a heron, which stands with the folded wings for a long time to grab its prey.

Animals

The intense observation on the animals is also mentioned in the Thirukkural. Valluvar described about the wildlife animals in the Kural 599. He described about the large body elephant with its sharp tusk.

Huge bulk of elephant with pointed tusk all armed,
When tiger threatens shrinks away alarmed!. (599)

It is a symbol of courage, strength and power. It is also praised for its size, long life, mighty, mental faculties, supportive spirit, and faithfulness. Though it has such power, it fears for the attack of the tiger in the jungle.

Trees

Valluvar mentioned about the trees and plants in his work. He used *Marunthu Maram*, the tree which cures the illness of the people by providing its air, shadow, leaves, tender fruits, fruits, dead leaves, Aerial roots and roots. The tree offers what it needs, though it is in the deep forest.

A tree that fruits in the hamlet's central mart,
Is wealth that falls to men of liberal heart. (216)

He also mentioned about Palm tree (104) and Bamboo tree (1113) in his work. In Kural 277 he mentioned '*kunr*' berry and its appearance. It shines scarlet bright in outer look but the nose of it is black.

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Active vs Reactive Texts in the translation of Thirukkural

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Adores the English department of Nehru Memorial College at Puthanampatti with more than fifteen years of teaching experience. Her areas of specialty include Indian Writing in English and American Literature. As a Convener of various programmes like, Guest Lecture on " Stress and De-Stress"; Workshop on ACEM Meditation Program; Mock Interview Program; Guest Lecture on Human Rights and Women's Rights she has brought laurels and accolades for NMC. Her participation in many conferences and seminars prove her vast knowledge and deep involvement in research.

[Abstract: Though Language provides the ability to imagine and to interpret one text from the other, Linguistic untranslatability arises many times due to the problem of suggestive meaning. A word could have different kinds of meaning through its etymology and association. While all translators are not creative writers, their suggestion of words could never be the same. But a translator's job is to reactivate the text from the active one. There are many problems of translation to which we haven't given much attention. A Language is not only a tool of communication, but also it is a living guide for human beings to communicate. It has its own culture, heritage and tradition. It is quite clear that a poor translation can lead to much confusion when most of the native ideas are foreign to these translators. The Problems of translation are like worms in the bud. It perishes the originality of the text and makes the translation a mere paraphrase. There are vast differences between a machine and a human being in the use of language. Machine's memory capacity is enormous and it is able to repeat the same as it is without changes in the text. But the human brain is not the same as like the machine. It is distinguished by its imaginative power; Because Language is the creative part of our brain. The functionality of the human brain is also different from one another. No writer thinks alike as the other. So the problem must be solved through step by step systematic analysis of the text. In my research paper, here is a deep analysis on the re-creation of Thirukkural by G.U.Pope.]

Translating literary works is, perhaps, always more difficult than translating other types of text because literary works have specific values called the aesthetic and expressive values. The aesthetic function of the work shall emphasize the beauty of the words (diction), figurative language, metaphors, etc. While the expressive functions shall put forward the writer's thought,

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emotion, etc. And the translator should try, at his best, to transfer these specific values into the target language (TL). As one genre of literature, poetry has something special compared to the others. In a poem, the beauty is not only achieved with the choice of words and figurative language like in novels and short stories, but also with the creation of rhythm, rhyme, meter, and specific expressions and structures that may not conform to that of the daily language. In short, the translation of poetry needs 'something more' than translating other genres of literature. Like the other great Vedic literatures, the Ramayana & the Mahabharata, Thirukkural is an epic. However, here the heroes are not princes & kings, nor are there any battles between demons or massive, monstrous armies. Instead, the hero of the poem is the common man, and Thiruvalluvar tells his experiences in the form of poetry. It contains 133 chapters with 10 couplets each. Like Francis Bacon in Literature, Thiruvalluvar talks about various topics that are relevant to human life. The Kural is not a book of rules, laws or commandments. But it is a book with sharp observations of real life, a deep understanding of human weaknesses and strengths, and wise suggestions as to how we can live up to our fullest capacities as free human beings. To the Tamilians, the Thirukkural is a divine book, but not in the sense of the Koran or Bible, which offer an obstinate outlook on the religious experience. The Thirukkural is simply a book to live by, a code of moral conduct to which all creeds, castes & colors can connect, whose lofty idealism has been acclaimed by all the religions of the world. Thirukkural is the most sacred text among the Tamil literary works. Even though the author name is unknown to us, it is widely said to be written by Thiruvalluvar. The book is translated into many languages by translators. Though Thirukkural is written on the basis of our Tamil culture, it is widely accepted all over the world for its well known ethics. Thirukkural is worshipped as the most sacred text especially for its ethical and moral values. Thirukkural comes under one of the ancient texts of our Tamil literature. So it has various differences from our modern Tamil which is used colloquially. It makes Thirukkural a very difficult one to translate in modern languages. According to V.C.Kulandhaisamy, "A cultural term in one language may not have an equivalent one in another culture. The word "Dharma" in Sanskrit is an example. It is not possible to find or coin a single term in English for Dharma; consequently the word Dharma is transliterated and used in

English as it is.” All proper nouns in Thirukkural never have equivalent words in other languages. They are transliterated. Transliteration is never considered a very good translation. Then we should ask which a good translation is? How can a translator reactivate from the activated text? Thirukkural is very simple and extremely subtle. It is written in couplet form which is written only with seven words. The text is written 2000 years ago. But it is timeless and still it exposes the civilization of our Tamil people. It is said in one of the histories of our literature that Thiruvalluvar submitted the palm-leaf manuscript of his work to the 49 scholars of the Sangam age. In modern age, it is available as books in paper. In 1272, the commentator Parimelazhagar arranged Thirukkural in the present form.

In translation, it is impossible to translate Thirukkural as the same couplet with seven words. Many translators have tried to paraphrase Thirukkural in so many languages. The question which arises in our mind is whether translation has cherished or perished in the originality of the text. Special Issue Published in International Journal of Trend in Research and Development
The first translation was made by an Italian Priest, Stantius Beschi.

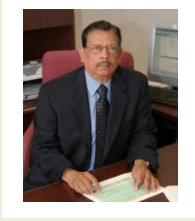
In 1853, Rev. Drew made Thirukkural translation before G.U.Pope. The latter one’s text is appreciated than his predecessors. G.U.Pope came to Tamilnadu at the age of 18. He considered himself as a student of Tamil. Though he could write in verse form, his text was varied in meter. When he considered other translators, they have translated partially or totally in heptametrical couplets or in tetra metric. The word Kural itself means in Tamil as short verse in Venba meter of two lines each. Thirukkural could say the morals which were needed essentially by our human beings. However this is impossible to analyze the variations of translations of Thirukkural. Let us deal with some of the translator’s effort to make the reactive text from the active text and a good translator who tries to keep up the originality of the text. The first couplet of Thirukkural from the “Praise of God” is translated by Rev.E.J.Robinson like this. “Eternal God all things precedes, As Alpha all the letter leads.” The same couplet is translated by G.U.Pope as “A, as it’s first of letters, every speech maintains The “Primary Deity” is first through all the worlds domains” E.J.Robinson translates the second couplet of the “Blessing of rain” as “The

rain begets the food we eat: The precious rain is drink and meat.” The same couplet is translated by G.U.Pope as “The rain makes pleasant food for eaters rise; as food itself, thirst quenching draught supplies.” These variations in translation lead to a confusion that the problem is not only in the equivalent word but also in the equivalence of the form. Though Pope’s translation is varied in meter and form, his translation is considered as worthy rather than others because of its content which gives the same suggestive meaning as like Thiruvalluvar. Pope uses the nuances of translating to keep the spirit of the originality of the text where others concentrated only on the form of Thirukkural. Thirukkural’s moral concepts are very easy to capture because it has a universal idealistic nature which has the power to reform the modern world by its ethics. Valluvar has divided it as Virtue, wealth and Love. The final couplets of Love cherish the culture of Tamilian’s love life, custom, discipline, amusement and relationship. All these ideas prove how Tamil society was a civilized one 2000 years ago. In England, English was considered only as the language of the common people. By some of the critics, English was not accepted as a language. It was only a dialect at that time and not a language. In my opinion, I think English has been enriched only by the translation of Thirukkural. The sacred text is not written for the rich or any other particular community. It is written for the common people of our society. Hence there is no astonishment for us to reactivate the sacred text again in a common people’s language. When do we appreciate the efforts of translators for translating a moral text to other languages We should realize the problems of the translators because the development of English was enormous only after it was widely accepted as the national language of England. Then it turned to be the lingua franca of the world. Due to England’s imperialistic ideas, English is made as an International language. Countries such as the U.S.A, U.K, Australia and Canada also have English as their National Language. When there is no similarity between British and American English, How is it possible for the translators to translate the active text as reactive one. Even though the Americans have English as their national language, when they try to read Thirukkural in English, they couldn’t feel the Nativity, sense of their language and so it again creates the problem. In English most of the Words are translated from German, French, Latin and Greek, All these words are accepted as English

words now. In Tamil, though we follow colloquial language to speak. The words which are derived from other languages will never be accepted by Tamil scholars as their language. They pay much devotion to originality. K.M.Munshi, in his introduction to “Rajaji’s translation” comments on the greatness of Thirukkural “In its essence, Thirukkural is a treatise par excellence in the art of living”. In his view, Thirukkural is not only a sacred text but it is also an art of living which teaches how to lead a life. So it is the duty of the translator to reactivate the art of living. Andre Lefebvre also opines the same.”Translators who translate with rhyme and meter as their first priority, often find themselves neglecting other features of the original”. Thus my conclusion is how so ever the translators scratch their heads and translates a piece of work; it does not contain the complete essence of the original. But however the translations give us a chance to read through other works of art belonging to other languages which enables us to widen our knowledge and enrich our mind and to have a broad vision of the world. Thus Thirukkural translated in other languages provide the needed philosophies of life even for the foreigners. Works cited [1] Thirukkural couplets translated by E.J.Robinson and Yogi [2] Suddhananda Bharati, The South India Saiva Siddhantha works Publishing society, Tinnevelley Ltd., Madras. 1954

(IJTRD), ISSN: 2394-9333, www.ijtrd.com International Conference on Active vs Reactive Texts: Literature, Language, Criticism, Theory and Translation (ICART-17) organized by Department of English, N.G.M. College, Pollachi, 4th and 5th Aug 2017 355

Valluvar on Learning, Knowledge, and Wisdom



R.Prabhakaran

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Introduction

In day-to-day conversations, people frequently use the terms 'learning,' 'understanding,' 'knowledge,' 'intelligence,' and 'wisdom.' Although people intuitively know the meanings of these terms, they ignore the proper definitions of these terms. Of these terms, 'learning' and 'understanding' are often used interchangeably. So also, the terms 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' are often used interchangeably. These terms are difficult to define. Their meanings and definitions may depend upon the context in which they are used. For the purpose of this essay, these terms can be described as follows:

Learning can be defined as acquiring knowledge or skills through formal education, self-study, listening to others, or experience. **Understanding** is to comprehend the intended meaning of what is being learnt.

Although learning is necessary to gain knowledge, it is not sufficient for gaining knowledge. For the learning to be useful, it should be accompanied by a thorough understanding of what has been learnt. For example, schoolchildren learn multiplication by memorizing the 'times table.' Although they know that $8 \times 7 = 56$, they may not know how to compute the product of two larger numbers like 1248 times 7865. This is because they have not understood the underlying principle of multiplication. It is not uncommon for students to

memorize their lessons to regurgitate them in their examinations. Such learning is of limited use to attain real knowledge or for applying what has been learnt.

Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and information that is meant to be useful. Knowledge is generally gained from learning through formal education, listening to others, reading books and other materials, and experience. **Intelligence** can be generally described as the ability to perceive information and retain it as knowledge to be applied towards adaptive behaviors within an environment or context. **Wisdom** is the ability to make sound judgments based on one's knowledge, experience, and understanding.

Just like the difference between learning and understanding, there is a vast difference between knowledge and wisdom. To illustrate the difference between knowledge and wisdom, the British journalist Miles Kington said humorously, "It is knowledge to know that tomato is a fruit. But it is wisdom not to use it in a fruit salad." There can be no wisdom without knowledge. But it is not uncommon for people to have knowledge without wisdom.

Learning

Valluvar places a strong emphasis on learning for everyone. First, he considers learning as the truly imperishable and flawless treasure to a man, and no other wealth is comparable to learning (Kural- 400). According to him, "Numbers and letters are like the two eyes of the human beings (Kural – 392)." It should be noted that what one could learn during the days of Valluvar was limited compared to the plethora of fields of studies in modern times. So, Valluvar's recommended study of numbers and letters would have included basic mathematics and literature dealing with human relations and philosophical concepts. However, in modern times the study of "numbers and letters" can be interpreted as the study of science and humanities.

Valluvar believes that the more one learns, the more one gains knowledge. He cites the example of a well in the sand-bed where water flow increases with the efforts to dig deeper and deeper. So also, the more extensive and intensive the learning, the more knowledge can be gained by the learner.

Water will flow from a well in the sand in proportion to the depth to which it is dug. So also, the more we learn, the more knowledge we acquire. (Kural – 396)

Valluvar contends that learning should be an ongoing process throughout one's life. He wonders why some people do not continue their learning throughout their life. "For the truly learned, every town and every country is their own; when that is so, why some people do not

continue the process of learning till their death (Kural – 397)?" This is truly a prophetic statement. Millions of people have migrated to countries other than their own, and they have been accepted in foreign lands and recognized for their talents. Those who continue to learn are often rewarded for their learning and experience.

Valluvar considers that learning is so important that he has one chapter for learning (Chapter – 40) and supplemented it with another chapter (Chapter – 42) in which he discusses learning by listening to others and an additional chapter (Chapter – 41) where he discusses the consequence of failure to learn. As mentioned previously, learning can be accomplished by several means. Apart from formal education and tutelage by scholars, listening to others is also valuable for obtaining knowledge. Life is too short to learn everything through formal education, self-study, or from one's own experiences. An additional and valuable source of knowledge is listening to others about their experiences and knowledge. For example, Akbar the Great ascended the throne of the Mogul empire in India at the tender age of thirteen. He could not read or write. He listened to his advisors, and with their help, he became one of the most extraordinary emperors of the Mogul dynasty.

To emphasize the importance of listening to others, Valluvar says, "*Wealth of knowledge obtained through listening to others is the greatest of all wealth* (Kural – 411)." The following Kurals further emphasize the importance of obtaining knowledge through listening to others.

When food for thought is not available through instructions from the learned, the stomach may be provided some food. (Kural – 412)

Learning is necessary, but even those who are not formally learned should listen to the wise, for such learning acquired through listening will be a staff of support in times of need. (Kural – 414)

The instructions that flow from learned men of righteous conduct constitute a firm staff on the slippery ground to the listener. (Kural – 415)

Valluvar expresses his deep contempt for those who do not spend time listening to the words of wisdom of the learned people. He says that it really does not matter whether such people live or die. The relevant Kural is as follows:

People who have not experienced the delights of listening to the expositions of the learned and relish only the tastes of the mouth, it matters little whether they live or die. (Kural – 420)

Valluvar's contempt for those who do not make the efforts necessary to gain knowledge through learning can be seen from the following Kurals:

The ignorant people just exist like the barren land, giving no yield to be considered fertile. (Kural – 406)

If a man does not develop his intellect by incisive learning, he is like a doll made of clay. (Kural – 407)

There is as much difference between the learned and the ignorant as between human beings and the beasts. (Kural – 410)

In condemning people who neglect to learn and the good counsel of learned people, Valluvar is in agreement with the Greek poet HESSIOD. The following statement is attributed to the famous Greek poet HESIOD who was generally thought by scholars to have been active around 700 BC and an authority on Greek mythology and considered history's first economist.

That man is the best who sees the truth by himself,

Good too is he who listens to wise counsel.

But who is neither wise himself nor willing

To ponder wisdom is not worth a straw.

- HESIOD

The importance of understanding

For learning to be useful, it should be accompanied by a thorough understanding of what has been learnt. Otherwise, such learning is of limited use to attain real knowledge or for applying what has been learnt. Valluvar is particular that one should clearly and beyond any semblance of doubt understand what one learns and apply what has been learnt.

One should learn what is worth learning thoroughly and then act in accordance with it.

(Kural – 391)

There are two things worth noting in the above Kural. First, Valluvar does not say what one should learn. Obviously, what one could learn during Valluvar's days was very limited compared to the vast amount of knowledge and the variety of disciplines of studies of modern times. If Valluvar had made a list of what one should learn, such a list would have become

obsolete a long time ago. This type of generalization makes the Kural immortal and relevant for all ages. The second thing to note about the Kural mentioned above is the fact that Valluvar says that one should live in accordance with what has been learnt. This can be interpreted as applying what has been learnt. To apply what has been learnt, one should learn thoroughly and understand clearly what has been learnt.

Wisdom

To make use of knowledge and to create new knowledge, one must have the ability to understand and apply what has been learnt. This ability to understand and apply the acquired knowledge is nothing but intelligence. This powerful combination of intelligence, knowledge, and experience becomes wisdom, a formidable tool in one's arsenal to protect him against destruction.

What exactly are the characteristics of wisdom? According to the Greek philosopher Plato (428/427 BC – 348/347 BC), perfect goodness is the ultimate end of all learning. Valluvar is in complete agreement with Plato and says that wisdom helps people achieve good and useful things.

Wisdom restrains the wayward mind and leads it from evil to good. (Kural – 422)

Valluvar mentions another characteristic of wisdom. According to him, an essential aspect of wisdom is rationalism. ***Rationalism*** is the practice of only believing what is based on reason. A rationalist will constantly question every hypothesis or belief and accept it only if it is based on reason. Also, a rationalist will come to conclusions by his reasoning ability and will not depend on beliefs and opinions. As a rationalist, a scientist will not accept a hypothesis unless it can be logically proven or experimentally verified. Valluvar emphasizes this idea of rationalism in the following Kural:

Whatever be the thing and whatever be its nature, wisdom is to find its true nature.

(Kural – 355)

In the above Kural, Valluvar stresses reasoning as the true method of gaining wisdom. This rationalistic approach of relentless questioning is the one that has been responsible for all the scientific discoveries. Valluvar also extends this rationalistic approach to discover the truth in any statement made by anyone.

To discern the real truth from whatever source it emanates is the true quality of wisdom.

(Kural – 423)

The above Kural is reminiscent of the Greek philosopher Socrates' approach to seeking the truth. This Kural encourages individuals to question all belief systems, including religious beliefs. Lord Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, has told his followers not to accept anything he said unless they are convinced that his statements are consistent and logical. More recently, in the twentieth century, there was a rationalist in Tamil Nadu, the state in India in which Valluvar was born. His name was E.V. Ramasamy, and he was affectionately called "Thanthai Periyar," which meant the "revered father-like person." He challenged the caste system of the Hindus, protested against the suppression of women, fought against all superstitious beliefs, and in an iconoclastic fashion, he even smashed the statues of one of the gods of the Hindu pantheon. Through his rationalistic reform, he brought about radical and irreversible changes in the Tamil society of which he was a part. Although he was a reformist, his approach was utterly non-violent with compassion towards everyone. To recognize E. V. Ramasamy, the United Nations Organization issued a citation which describes him as "the prophet of the new age, the Socrates of South East Asia, father of social reform movement and an arch-enemy of ignorance, superstitions, meaningless customs, and base manners." His life exemplified the emphasis of rationalism in the Kurals mentioned above.

According to Valluvar, the mark of true wisdom is to conform to society and live in harmony with society. Of course, this does not mean accepting every belief prevalent in society and sacrificing one's rational thinking ability. One can be a rationalist and still be a good neighbor and a good citizen. A good rationalist can agree to disagree and still live in harmony with society. The idea here is similar to the proverb, "In Rome, do as Romans do." The following two Kurals convey Valluvar's point of view of the need for conformity with society:

It is part of wisdom to conform to the ways of the world. (Kural – 426)

Those who cannot live in harmony with the world will be considered ignorant even if they are learned. (Kural – 140)

Valluvar mentions one more characteristic of real wisdom. That is, it is real wisdom to convey even complicated subject matter in simple terms and be able to understand even the subtle nuances of what others say. It is a common observation that those who have mastery of a subject will be able to explain their ideas and clarify all doubts of the listeners. Often, it is the confused person who confuses others. This is the idea conveyed in the following Kural:

The wise express profound thoughts in simple terms and grasp the subtleties of what others say. (Kural – 424)

Characteristics of people with wisdom

As mentioned earlier, wisdom is the combination of intelligence, experience, and knowledge. A man of wisdom will be smart enough to plan ahead and be ready to encounter any situation. Because of his planning and forethought, he will be aware of what could happen in the future and be prepared for any eventuality. In a chess game, a master player exhibits his superior knowledge and experience, plans several moves ahead, and anticipates his opponent's possible moves. A wise man behaves in the same manner.

Men of wisdom know what will happen and are prepared for what is coming; the unwise are unaware of what is ahead of them. (Kural – 427)

There is no terrifying shock to the wise who have the foresight to guard themselves against the coming evil. (Kural – 429)

Wisdom is the ultimate and impregnable defense for protection against destruction. It is also the fortress of inner strength against enemy onslaughts. (Kural – 421)

Men of wisdom will be smart to know what type of undertaking will be successful. They will not venture into risky schemes in business and lose their capital. In general, they know what they should guard against and will act accordingly.

Men of wisdom will not embark on risky ventures and lose their capital to gain something. (Kural – 463)

The truly wise will fear what is to be feared. Only the ignorant will be foolhardy. (Kural – 428)

Men of wisdom exhibit a sense of compassion towards all and stay away from harming others by their words or deeds. They will have no intention of coveting what belongs to others. They will not indulge in idle talk. Men of wisdom will not hurt even those who harm them. They will treat others' sufferings as their own. The following Kurals stress these ideas either directly or indirectly.

*Deep and vast knowledge and wisdom are useless if one madly covets another
man's wealth?* (Kural – 175)
Men of wisdom will never utter useless words. (Kural – 198)
The best and the most precious of all wisdom is not to return evil for evil. (Kural – 203)
*What good is a man's wisdom if he does not treat others' suffering
as his own?* (Kural – 315)

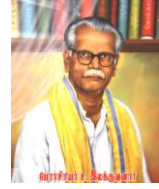
Conclusion

Valluvar emphasizes that lifelong learning is essential for everyone. Also, according to him, learning should be accompanied by an understanding of what is being learnt. Learning together with understanding becomes knowledge. Wisdom evolves when intelligence and experience are combined with knowledge. True wisdom directs one towards good and useful activities. True wisdom is based on rationalism, compassion, forethought, conformity with society, and moral values. The statement "Knowledge is power" is attributed to Sir Francis Bacon (1561 AD – 1626 AD), an English philosopher and statesman. But according to Valluvar, "knowledge is power. But wisdom is more powerful and useful."



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THE BARD OF UNIVERSAL MAN

--Justice S.Maharajan



Justice. S.Maharajan was born in the year 1913 at Trichirapalli, Tamil Nadu. A scholar in Tamil and English, a staunch votary of Tamil music, Thiru S.Maharajan joined the State judiciary in 1943, after practicing as an advocate for eight years, and was elevated to the High Court of Madras in September 1969. After retirement, he was Chairman of the State Official Languages (Legislative) Commission, of the Expert Committee to promote translation of foreign classics into Tamil and vice-versa and of the Archaka's Committee to go into the question of appointment of archakas. As the Chief of the judicial service in Pondicherry for four years, Mr. Maharajan was responsible for the introduction of Indian legal system in the erstwhile French courts. Among the 15 books authored by him are translations of Shakespeare's works. His English monograph on Kamban and Thiruvalluvar were published by the Sahithya Akademi. Apart from his mastery of Kamba Ramayanam, he had been lecturing on the mysticism of Saint Tirumoolar. He was the president of the Tamil Isai Sangam

The weaver of Mylapore had a wholesome world-view; the pattern in his carpet becomes visible as we look at his multiple tinted Kurals in the light of the whole. He was essentially an optimist. At a time when the religions around him had developed profound misgivings about the reality of the world and started concerning themselves with man's redemption from the world, Valluvar concerned himself with the improvement of the human predicament through love and compassion. While the Protagonists of Maya taught others to say 'No' to life, Valluvar with all his might said 'Yes'. He opposed inactivity and indifference to the world and declared, "Evil Karma (action) is better than no Karma". He said so because a man, who did evil deeds, was at least in touch with reality, and there was, therefore, the possibility of his correcting himself; but there was no such possibility for the man who believed in non-activity. He demanded of man not only an inner perfection but also an outer activity in the shape of selfless service to others.

The people, who believe in world and life affirmation, are usually preoccupied with worldly activity and are indifferent to their spiritual welfare. On the contrary, those who believe in world and life-negation put their spiritual welfare in the forefront and neglect the activities of the world. In fact, while the Bhagavad-Gita said, "Be unconcerned in action", those accustomed to life-negation became unconcerned with action. The Kural, on the other hand, struck the golden mean between the two schools of thought and called for external activity as much as for internal freedom. Dr. Albert Schweitzer in his 'Indian Thought and its Development' at page 16 says: "World and Life Negation are found in the thought of Jesus in so far as he did not assume that the Kingdom of God would be realized in this natural world. He expected that this natural world would very speedily come to an end and be superseded by a super-natural world in which all that is imperfect and evil would be overcome by the power of God". On the contrary, Valluvar believed that in this very natural world, the liberated man can find his heaven and said that perfect bliss could be attained by an individual in this natural world itself and it is unnecessary to wait indefinitely for the transformation of the world in order to transform oneself. Thus he took life and world affirmation to a loftier plane than Christ. In Jain and Buddhist thought, non-violence was originally advocated out of an eagerness to keep oneself uncontaminated by the world; in fact, the principle of non-violence originated in those religions from the principle of non-activity. But in Valluvar, positive love and compassion are the basis, upon which non-violence is justified.

Another contribution Tiruvalluvar made to the world of thought is equally original. He said: “Whatever is good conduces to happiness and whatever is productive of good is the truth”. This theory of truth is an important event in the history of philosophy. Yet another contribution made by Tiruvalluvar was to free the concept of God from the trammels put upon it by denominational religions. Diderot, the 18th Century French Philosopher, rejected with scorn the God revealed in the Bible and pleaded with his countrymen to rise to a conception of God worthy of the Universe that science had revealed: “Enlarge and Liberate God”, he demanded. Nearly two millennia before Diderot, Tiruvalluvar had enlarged and liberated God by equating Him with pure and absolute love.

In fact, Tirumoolar, one of the spiritual descendants of Tiruvalluvar expounded this theory of love in Tirumandiram, a collection of 3000 immortal songs in Tamil. In one of his songs, he says:— They are fools, who say that Love and God are two; they know not that Love and God are one; after knowing that Love and God are one, they remain rooted in Love-as-God. While Western thought was in the main concerned with Man and Society and tended to ignore his relationship to his Maker, oriental thought reversed the process and was concerned more with man’s relation to his Maker than with man’s relation to man. Valluvar absorbed the best from both these schools. His chief glory is that he effected a synthesis of the two for the first time in the history of thought. This is obviously why Dr. Albert Schweitzer, one of the greatest philosophers and humanitarians of the 20th Century, says in his “Indian Thought and its Development” as follows:—

“That the idea of active love did arise in the popular ethics of India in fairly ancient times we know from many stories we meet in her literature and especially through the ethical maxims found in the Kural, a work which probably belongs to the 2nd Century A.D.”

“What a difference between the Kural and the Laws of Manu which originated some four centuries before it! In the latter, under the dominance of the Brahmanic spirit, world and life affirmation is still just tolerated alongside world and life negation. In the Kural, world and life-negation is only like a distant cloud in the sky.”

“In the ethics of the Kural, as in those of the Laws of Manu, the idea of reward has a place. The way of virtue is recommended because it leads to a better reincarnation or to liberation from rebirth. Alongside of this is found also the naive view, which is so conspicuous in Chinese ethics, that moral behaviour results in earthly welfare and immoral in misfortune. Nevertheless, ethics in the Kural are not so entirely dominated by the idea of reward as in Brahmanism, Buddhism, and the Bhagavad-Gita. We already find here the knowledge that good must be done for its own sake. It shines out from various maxims”.

“Even though one should say there is no higher world, it is still good to give” (222)—“True liberality asks nothing in return. What does the world give in return to the cloud that gives it rain?” (211)

“Whilst the Bhagavad Gita in a forced and chilly manner gives as a motive for remaining in active life that it is in accordance with the order of the Universe, the Kural justifies it—what an advance!—by the idea of ethical activity. Work and profit place a man in a position to do good.”

“According to the Kural, duty is not confined, as in the Bhagavad-Gita to what the caste ailing involves, but consists in general in “all that is good”.

“Maxims about joy in activity, such as one would not expect from Indian lips, bear witness to the strength of the world and life affirmation present in the Kural”.

“Like the Buddha and the Bhagavad-Gita, the Kural desires inner freedom from the world and a mind free from hatred. Like them it stands for the commandment not to kill and not to damage. It has appropriated all the valuable ethical results of the thought of world and life negation. But in addition to this ethic of inwardness there appears in the Kural the living ethic of love.”

“With sure strokes the Kural draws the ideal of simple ethical humanity. On the most varied questions concerning the conduct of man to himself and to the world its utterances are characterised by nobility and good sense. There hardly exists in the literature of the world a collection of maxims in which we find so much lofty wisdom.”

“So a natural and ethical world and life affirmation of this kind was present among the people of India at the beginning of our era, although nothing of it can be found in Brahmanism, Buddhism and Bhagavad-Gita Hinduism. It gradually penetrates into Hindu thought through the great religious teachers who had sprung from the lower castes and lived among and felt with the people.”

Thus Dr. Albert Schweitzer puts Tiruvalluvar on the highest peak of Indian thought.

Shri Aurobindo in his book, “The Foundations of Indian Culture” —(Page 358) refers to the Tirukkural as “the Gnostic Poetry, the greatest in plan, conception and force of execution, ever written in this kind, of the Tamil Saint, Tiruvalluvar.” The man, who has earned such compliments, must have spent the greater part of his life thinking about Man, about human conditions and about the best way of leading life while on this planet. He worked out his concepts in a pragmatic manner so that they could be applied to the details of daily living. In the great systole and diastole of history, an age of licentiousness is succeeded by an age of severe discipline. From the way Valluvar condemns the vices of man, it may not be far wrong to presume that the society in which he lived was profligate, given to tall talk, violence and triviality. At the same time, it may be noticed that Valluvar presents a many-toned picture of a society, which had a high culture which was sophisticated and well-ordered and which had an opulent religious, aesthetic, economic and political activity and had an abundant life-movement. 102

While dealing with such a society and commenting upon it, he reveals his clairvoyant intelligence as well as the fact that he was a masterly mixture of wisdom and learning, idealism and pragmatism, gravity and humour, austerity and romance. He salted his profound observations with kindly humour, and occasionally, with biting sarcasm. Tiruvalluvar left little to be said on any major problems of life. The accumulated impression that one receives from what he has said is that the sage rather than the warrior was the ideal of Valluvar, and his ideal man (Sanror) not only talked philosophy but also lived it. His writings leave us the impression that he had a strong conviction that compassion is the power that holds the different parts of the Universe together and the greatest happiness can only come from, and the perfect morality would consist in, a sensitive loyalty to this whole.

The witchery of Valluvar enables him to give himself wisely both to the pursuit of Truth and to the creation of Beauty. He not only founded a new philosophy but also gave expression to it in poems of such sculptured power that no man has equaled them. The Kurals, as a whole, have just enough lightness to float the burden of Valluvar’s thought. Tiruvalluvar coined phrases and invented expressions, which have put both language and philosophy heavily in his debt. The very composure and majesty with which he sums up immense things reflect the confidence, poise and grace with which he met the problems of life. No mistiness, vagueness, sophistry, prevarication or indecision clouds his writings. There is a vital inwardness and ripeness about his couplets arising from his extraordinary maturity and mellowness.

He, therefore, drops his fruits of wisdom like a ripe tree. Above all, his colossal and loving inclusiveness gives him a vision that refuses to recognise the trivialities of caste, community or nation. His is a cosmopolitanism, which he shared with another Tamil Poet, Poon Kundranar, who was probably coeval in time with Tiruvalluvar and who showed similar catholicity by proclaiming:— Every country is my native land and every man my kinsman. In the great republic of letters, Valluvar had few equals. Rightly did G.U. Pope hail him as “The Bard of Universal Man”.

Thiruvalluvar Guides us for ever

- Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar

(This is just an attempt to introduce the chapter "*ookkam udaimai*". If it is welcome I will continue my chapter wise introduction of our universal scripture Thirukkural in the forthcoming issues.)

Most of us sincerely believe that taking a course of vitamin pills may make us enthusiastic, gaining vigor to work effectively. Somebody inculcate a regular habit to take vitamin pills as a usual diet. It may be yet another superstition to think like that.

"Always remember to take your Vitamins: Take your Vitamin A for Action, Vitamin B for Belief, Vitamin C for Confidence, Vitamin D for Discipline, Vitamin E for Enthusiasm!" Says Pablo.

Yes, Enthusiasm is the important vitamin which is not sold anywhere, but produced in your inner mind, while you create a passion for the target you wish to achieve.

Thiruvalluvar advises us to have a powerful will or unfailing vigor with a self-motivation for our achievement in a separate chapter titled "*ookkam udaimai*." The Tamil word *ookkam* which Thiruvalluvar recommends for our success is translated as "energy" by G.U.Pope and as "powerful will" by K.M.Balasubramanian who are the successful fore-runners in translating Thirukkural in English at the dawn of 20th century.

What Valluvar advises is "unceasing perseverance."

The possession of powerful will or target-oriented motivation is the most valuable possession which will help us to achieve Himalayan heights.

The men who are as owners known are owners of good zeal.

Are those without it, owners of the things with which they deal.-Kural-591[KMB]

Energy makes out the man of property; as for those who are destitute of it, do they (really) possess what they possess? (Pope)

Possession of gorgeous palaces and cloud-capped sky-scrappers may give immense pleasure and elation with exemplary pride. But if a strong earthquake occurs, in a flash of second, all the prideful possessions will disappear instantly.



Just think of the fall of Japan in the Second World War and its rise to a new peak by its meticulous works. Japan attacked nearly all of its Asian neighbors, allied itself with Nazi Germany and launched a surprise assault on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor. We need not elaborate history here but the unimaginable fall of Japan and the colossal loss of human lives are pathetic pages of world history. The lesson for us is the powerful will and mighty vigor of the people who stood as a united family to redress the sorrowful losses they met.



The fall after Hiroshima&Nagasaki



The Emergence of Modern Japan

The devastated Japanese economy rose quickly from the ashes of World War II. By 1956, real per capita GDP had overtaken the pre-war 1940 level. During the recovery period (1945–56), per capita GDP rose at an average annual rate of 7.1%. Recovery was followed by the era of rapid growth era. As the graph reveals, Japan began closing in on the West once again, and at a speed far exceeding its prewar progress. That is history which teaches us the immense need of a powerful will at times of natural calamities and man-made disasters.

To own a powerful will alone true ownership can be.

The ownership of properties will stay not but will flee. –Kural-592.kmb.

'Lost is our wealth,' they utter not this cry distressed,

The men of firm concentrated energy of soul possessed.-Kural-593.gup.

At times of natural catastrophes out of control, while huge loss of properties and colossal tragedies occur in China, they never accept any type of help from any country or organization. They even gently deny receiving from U.N.O. The strong will and exemplary vigor of the people is recently noted at the time of COVID disaster which originally started there.

Not only countries, but also individuals need such will and vigor to reach new peaks and to come-over unexpected mishaps.

If you have the will and vigor, that is the real and prideful possession, which makes you with a glowing personality. All other belongings have no meaning if they are the possessions of a lazy and lethargic person with a sluggish nature.

The man of energy of soul inflexible,

Good fortune seeks him out and comes a friend to dwell.

Wealth will find its own way to the man of unfailing energy. 594.gup.

"In your hands will be placed the exact results of your thoughts; you will receive that which you earn, no more, no less. Whatever your present environment may be, you will fail, remain, or rise with your thoughts, your wisdom, desire, as great as your dominant aspiration." says James Allen.

If you rise to the occasion, if you can respond with more vigor and determination you can achieve anything you desire. "You have powers you never dreamed of. You can do things you never thought you could do. There are no limitations in what you can do except the limitations of your own mind." While Darwin P. Kingsley said this he didn't know Thiruvalluvar had advised these two thousand years ago.



From Paper delivery boy To President of India-Dr.A.P.J.Abdul kalam

With rising flood the rising lotus flower its stem unwinds;

The dignity of men is measured by their minds.- 595

The stalks of water-flowers are proportionate to the depth of water; so is men's greatness proportionate to their minds.-gup

According to a 2015 study led by Gerben A. Van Kleef at the University of Amsterdam, powerful people find themselves more inspiring than anybody else. In a study of 140 undergraduates, he found that people who agreed highly to statements like "I can get others to do what I want" were more inspired by talking about their own life-changing experiences than hearing other people discuss theirs.

"The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of Hell, a hell of Heaven." are the famous lines of John Milton often quoted by millions of writers worldwide.

The mind is a powerful force. It can enslave us or empower us. It can plunge us into the depths of misery or take us to the heights of ecstasy. Focused mind-power is one of the strongest forces on earth.

Whatever you ponder, let your aim be loftily still,

Fate cannot hinder always, thwart you as it will. -596-gup

If you are interested in sports your target should be an Olympic award; if you wish to be a writer your aim should be the Nobel Prize; if you enter theatre your goal will be an Oscar award. Never mind if you are not awarded with such accolades, it is enough if people talk about your performance as a superb one and it qualifies for such kind of appreciation.



The zenith of the tallest mount can be reached by zeal and zest
Power of will leads us for conquest
Try..Try and try till you gain triumph.

Aim at million, never mind if you fail to secure even a single pie.

The men of lofty mind quail not in ruin's fateful hour,

The elephant retains his dignity mind arrows' deadly shower. -597

The strong minded will not faint, even when all is lost; the elephant stands firm, even when wounded by a shower of arrows.

Nelson Mandela, the anti-apartheid leader who was jailed 27 years for his activism and in 1994 became President of South Africa, regularly recited the poem *Invictus* during his imprisonment. *Invictus*, meaning unconquerable or undefeated in Latin, was written in 1875 by William Ernest Henley.

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
for my unconquerable soul.



In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeoning of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.



Nelson Mandela as prisoner and President

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,

I am the captain of my soul. (*Invictus* by English poet William Ernest Henley)

As we maneuver through these challenging times, let us keep in mind the power of this poem to confront adversity and to come out the other side of it with the creation of positive change.

At this point we can think of the trial and tribulations underwent by our ancestors, the freedom-fighters, who suffered a lot in their struggle for freedom, lucidly portrayed by Bharatiyar in his poem.

Even if I am to leave
the comforts of my home,
and live behind the bars and tortured,
even if I have to give up all pleasures and joys,
and am scorned and reviled,
even if I am totally ruined by a thousand calamities,
O Goddess of Freedom!

I shall never forget to offer my prayers to you.



[A PRAYER TO THE GODDESS OF FREEDOM: -POEMS- Subramania Bharati- National Council of Educational Research and Training- New Delhi-p.61]

I am afraid we may be diverted from the main point, but it is befitting to note the powerful emotion of our ancestors who fought against the British regime as portrayed in this poem of Bharatiyar. Their aim was to relieve our country from the clutches of British imperialism. Despite their non-violent protests and agitations they were tortured by all sorts of punishments.

Even then they never gave out their peaceful 'hartals' and non-co-operation activities. Lofty ideals and noble deeds should be our aim. Even if we fail in our achievement it will create a history.

Our planned and persistent strive to achieve things will surely give us a position to help others. Enjoying the fruits of labor means sharing the advantages we gain with others.

The soulless man can never gain

The ennobling sense of power with men. - 598

Those who have no (greatness of) mind will not acquire the joy of saying in the world, "we have exercised liberality". gup

'We are quite liberal in our gifts'—such self-esteeming worth,

The persons void of powerful will can ne'er attain on earth.kmb

The power of will or vigor to achieve in life will surely help us to gain a higher position in our life, thereby making us to share our benefits. Those who have no vigor will be useless to the society. Our energy or power of will shape our personality. The tiger, even though smaller than an elephant in size has much vigor and energy makes it more powerful than the elephant which is enormous in size.



Huge bulk of elephant with pointed tusk all armed,

When tiger threatens shrinks away alarmed! -599

*Although the elephant has a large body, and a sharp tusk, yet it fears the
claw of the tiger. Gup*

Although a tusker is so huge, with tusk, as sharp as spear,

When by a tiger charged it is, the tusker quails with fear.- 599.kmb

Here elephant and tiger are only symbols. They need not be animals but also may be countries, parties or organizations. It is not the size that counts but the vigor or energy alone determines the success. We have got many lessons from history which needs no elaboration.

Firmness of soul in man is real excellence;

Others are trees, their human form a mere pretence.- 600.gup

Energy is mental wealth; those men who are destitute of it are only trees in the form of men.

The power of will doth constitute the wisdom great of one.

Who are devoid of that are trees, save that they look like men.- 600.kmb

Those people without vigor are described as '*maram*' by Thiruvalluvar and the Tamil word '*maram*' does not mean tree here. With due apology to GUP and KMB the term may be translated as **wood**. The trees, even though rooted firmly on the soil, move their branches to the proper direction to get sunlight and that is called photo-trophy. Their roots move freely under the soil to get the water they require for its growth. It is a fact that they miraculously penetrate even the hard rocks to get water. So, lethargic and sluggish men, can never be compared to trees which are dynamic in their growth process. Those people without vigor are just wooden dolls which don't move freely without any external force.

Let us be energetic and act with vigor and powerful will. Our aim should be higher than the Himalayan peaks. Poet Bharatiyar welcomes younger generation with such affable qualities in his poem.

Welcome
—you with brilliant eyes!
Welcome
—you with a strong heart!
Welcome
—you with enchanting words!
Welcome
—you with sturdy shoulders!
Welcome
—you with clarity of mind!
Welcome
—you who rage against meanness!
Welcome
—you who weep for the poor!
Welcome
—you who walk with the majesty of a bull!



Telugu poet Sri Sri who considered himself as a disciple of Bharatiyar echoes this in his poem "maro prapancham" (Yet another world).

Yet another world welcomes you
Step forward, step with force,
Let us go forward with speed.



Telugu poet Sri Sri

Thiruvalluvar advises to keep “ookkam” [power of will/energy] as one of our important possessions. Neither lands nor jewels count as possessions or properties as they do not add any progress in our life. The static land and idle gold never keep us cheerful and active. Perhaps they may arouse jealousy in the minds of our friends and relatives if they happen to know that we keep them.

Let us keep energy and vigor as our valuable possession and strive sincerely to uplift our family, society and country.

Arise! Awake!

Before your fiery eyes

Even the sun will look like a tiny spark!

East will not dawn in its course!

We have to tear it off to make it red!

You have got a tiger’s strength!

Frustration is a spider’s web!

Do you intend to sleep in it?

Arise! Awake! My dear friend!

Your awakening will yield

A great revolution in Nature’s course!

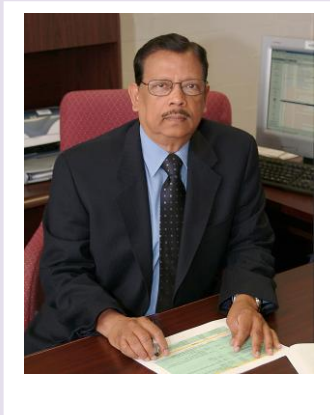


---Poet Thaaraa Bhaarathi (Translation mine)

Thaaraa Bharathi

[Note:gup=G.U.Pope: kmb=K.M.Balasubramaniyan.The translation of G.U.Pope is accompanied by his commentary in italics.]

Valluvar's Strategy for Success



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Introduction

There are numerous books on “self-help” written by eminent psychologists and others who have analyzed the characteristics of people who are considered successful in one or more aspects of their lives. Also, excellent seminars are frequently conducted by very talented, motivational speakers encouraging their audience to emulate the successes of other successful people. These books and seminars have been undoubtedly beneficial to many people. Like the modern-day psychologists and self-help gurus, Valluvar, who lived about two thousand years ago, has analyzed several aspects of human life. He has proposed his own strategy for success in his magnum opus, the Kural. The strategy proposed by Valluvar has stood the test of time, and it is valid even today. The purpose of this essay is to describe Valluvar’s strategy for achieving success in life.

What is success?

Generally, success is considered the attainment of wealth, position, honors, recognition, etc. But this definition of success seems somewhat incomplete. If an individual would like to achieve recognition and fame and if he gets them, he would certainly consider that as a success. On the other hand, if someone does not want recognition and fame and if he happens to get them, he would feel uncomfortable and might not consider that a success. Success may mean different things to different people. It may also mean different things at different times for the same person. For example, when a young man is in financial difficulties, he may consider that a success if he works hard and gets a bonus.

When he is financially secure, he may consider receiving a major promotion as a success instead of a bonus. So, defining success as “attaining a desired goal” seems more appropriate.

People often dream of success. A dream is an aspiration or wishful thinking of achieving the desired goal. If so, what is the difference between a dream and a goal? Dreams are something one thinks about. Goals are something one acts on. Dreams can happen without any effort, whereas goals require action. Dreams are imaginary. Goals are based on reality. Dreams do not have a deadline. But, goals do have deadlines. In order for the dream to come true, one should have a goal and work towards achieving that goal. Once that goal is achieved, one is said to have attained success.

If success means achieving the desired goal, can there be a unique strategy for success that is independent of the goal? If someone dreams of becoming wealthy, he would develop specific goals and plan his actions towards that goal and work towards that goal. Similarly, if someone wants to achieve fame, there are different approaches, and the actions to be taken will depend upon the type of fame the individual is hoping to achieve. Whereas, if someone has the goal of reducing his weight, he would definitely need a totally different set of actions than the one who wants to accumulate wealth or achieve fame. Therefore, is it really possible to have a common comprehensive strategy for achieving success or attaining the desired goal? Although the strategy for achieving a specific goal is clearly dependent upon that goal, the underlying principles for achieving any goal are the same. In his remarkable book, “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,” Dr. Steven R. Covey describes the seven habits common among successful people. The well-known self-help guru Zig Ziglar is considered one of the most outstanding motivational speakers who had the phenomenal ability to uplift and inspire his audiences through his eloquent delivery of effective messages. In his seminal book “See You at the Top,” he identifies a six-step process that would lead his readers to success in their lives. The strategies recommended by Steven Covey, Zig Ziglar, and others like them are basic to accomplishing any goal. Two thousand years ago, Valluvar also adopted a similar approach and arrived at a general strategy for achieving any goal in his eternally valid and universally acceptable Kural.

Step 1. Dream Big

The well-known comedy actor Jim Carrey went to Hollywood in 1987 looking for a career in acting. When he was struggling to find his way through Hollywood, he wrote a check for himself for \$10

million. He dated the check "Thanksgiving 1995" and added the notation, "for acting services rendered." That was his dream. By the time the year 1995 came, he had become successful in his career and had acted in several box-office hit movies. He had become a superstar, and his asking price per picture was \$20 million. Jim Carrey's story is not an isolated example of dreaming for success. Great inventors, artists, leaders, and athletic superstars have all used the "creative visualization" technique, which is another name for dreaming. For example, Wilbur and Orville Wright must have imagined the possibility of constructing a flying machine before they set out to design and build the Kitty Hawk in 1903. When President John F. Kennedy expressed his desire for the Americans to travel to the moon, it was his dream. The famous Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King dreamed of racial equality and wished that someday "justice would roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream" in the USA. Successful athletes routinely visualize their success before they attain it. Musicians imagine receiving standing ovations and accolades from their audiences before their actual concerts. Great generals like Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte visualized their success in the wars they waged and motivated their troops to achieve their victories. It is a common practice in many corporations to express their lofty ideals regarding their products and services in their vision statements which help to motivate their employees to do their best. Therefore, it appears that many successful people from all walks of life had dreams or visions of their success.

Valluvar places great importance on having lofty ideals as the basis for human achievements. The height of the water lilies' stems in a pond continues to increase as the water level rises. Valluvar says, in the same manner, the greatness achieved by an individual is in proportion to the lofty ideals he has in his mind.

The stalk of water-lily grows as the water level rises; so also, the greatness achieved by a man is determined by his lofty ideals. (Kural – 595)

The question arises as to whether 'Having big dreams guarantees success?' The simple answer is "No." Dreams alone cannot guarantee success. The probability of success increases if the dreams are accompanied by appropriate goals, hard work, dedication, and persistence. Even then, it is entirely possible that one may not achieve the desired degree of success. The famous boxer Mike Tyson is quoted as saying, "If I shoot for the moon, even if I don't get the moon, I might get some clouds." That is very true. If the big dream is accompanied by dedication, specific goals, hard work, and persistence, one may achieve positive results if not complete success.

One of my brothers had a dream of becoming a General of the Indian army. That was his dream right from a very early age. During his school days, he had studied the life history of Napoleon Bonaparte with great interest and admired Napoleon's military genius. When he was about eighteen years old, he wanted to join the army. He could only join as a soldier. But his dream of becoming a high-ranking officer was always alive. He appeared for competitive examinations held for the selection of officers. Although he scored very high in the written tests, he failed in the interview. This was primarily due to the bias in the Indian army that once someone was a soldier, he was considered virtually unfit to become an officer. But, in his third attempt, he was successful and became an officer. By virtue of his superior performance, he was promoted to the ranks of Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Lieutenant Colonel, Colonel, and Brigadier General. He was short-listed for the position of Major General. But, in India, positions like Major General and above are political appointments. He did not have the necessary political connection, and as a result, he had to retire as a Brigadier General. Even though his dream did not materialize the way he anticipated, he accomplished most of what he hoped to achieve and had a great career in the Indian army.

The story of my brother is not unique. There are numerous examples of athletes, military generals, politicians, corporate leaders achieving most of their dreams, if not in their entirety. The process of dreaming and working towards achieving the dream produces a wealth of benefits to the dreamer. Valluvar has thought about this aspect of the dream and says that it is still good to dream and work towards it even if it does not come true.

Think lofty thoughts always; even if they fail to materialize, it is still as good as having materialized. (Kural – 596)

So, lofty ideals and big dreams are indeed the basis for success, and therefore one should certainly dream, and persistent hard work towards achieving that dream will invariably make the dream come true.

Step 2. Set goals

Is it possible to play a football game without a goal line being marked or a basketball game being played without the hoop? The players will be totally lost, and the game cannot be played. They are essential for playing the game. So also, the goals in life are of vital importance for our success. Thinking

big dreams is an excellent beginning. But to realize those dreams, specific goals must be set, and relevant actions should be undertaken to achieve those goals. By nature, dreams are expressions of our desires. The more intense and passionate our dreams are, the more likely that we will take actions to achieve those dreams. In order to achieve our dreams, it is essential that our actions are focused towards a clear, attainable, and relevant goal to achieve our dreams.

Pursuing actions without a clear goal is like undertaking a journey without deciding on the destination. We may end up somewhere and not necessarily in our desired destination. It is also essential that the goal should be realistic and attainable. For example, if an older man in his 90s sets a goal of running one hundred meters under ten seconds, it would be impossible for him to achieve that goal. He would have wasted his energy and perhaps endangered himself. Finally, if the goal has no relevance to the dream, then it will not help to achieve the dream. For example, if one wants to be wealthy, one must have a relevant goal and should not engage in risky financial ventures where he is likely to lose his capital. Valluvar has considered all these issues about the goal-setting process. He emphasizes the need for a clear goal based on a thorough analysis of the situation. He is in favor of consulting knowledgeable people before actions are undertaken. His ideas regarding the need for a clear goal and the goal-setting process can be found in the following Kurals.

Those who fear disgrace will not venture anything without having a clear goal in mind.

(Kural - 464)

Consider the pros and cons and the net gain before venturing into any action.

(Kural - 461)

Nothing is difficult to attain for those who consult with knowledgeable people before venturing into action.

(Kural – 462)

Actions should follow analytic decisions resulting from deep deliberations; it is a disgrace to commence actions before such deliberations.

(Kural – 467)

One will be ruined if one does what should not be done; one will be ruined if one fails to do what should be done.

(Kural – 466)

Step 3. Develop a Plan

It is said that “failing to plan is planning to fail.” Zig Ziglar makes a humorous remark in his book, “See You at the Top,” that Sir Edmund Hilary was not just walking around and one day found himself on the top of Mount Everest. Sir Edmund Hilary and other successful people in other walks of life like business, politics, and warfare did not achieve their success by simply having a dream and a goal. They all had a well-thought-out plan and worked hard to achieve their goals. This is true in our personal life too. Once a goal has been established, then one should consider all aspects related to that goal and chart a clear plan of action. A dream without appropriate goals will be just a wishful thinking. A goal without a plan is also not attainable. Once a relevant, realistic and achievable goal is set, the next step is to develop a plan to achieve that goal. Valluvar offers several interesting and valuable suggestions regarding the planning process. As usual, his approach is very general. His ideas about planning are applicable to a General preparing for a war or for a businessman venturing on a new project, or for an individual trying to achieve his personal goal based on his ambitions, desires, and dreams. He stresses five aspects as essential components of a good plan.

Consider thoroughly the resources, means, tasks, timing and place of action before embarking on action. (Kural – 675)

The term “resources” mentioned in the above Kural would imply financial resources, human resources, and other necessary resources. Valluvar discusses the importance of resources in the following Kural:

Before launching an operation, assess the resources needed for the task, your own resources, the resources of the enemy (competitor), and the resources of your allies, and then act.

(Kural – 471)

In the modern-days, corporate as well as military planners base their plans on what is called “SWOT Analysis.” SWOT is the acronym for **S**trength, **W**eakness, **O**pportunity, and **T**hreat. Though the details may vary, the basic idea of Valluvar in the above Kural and the SWOT analysis is very similar. By way of explanation for this Kural, Dr. S. M. Diaz attributes the humiliating defeat of the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in the Kuwait war to his lack of appreciation for the military strength of the USA. If an

individual's goal has anything to do with competing with others, then the principles of SWOT analysis are also applicable to that individual. In the following Kurals, Valluvar warns that lack of realistic assessment of one's resources could spell danger:

There are many who, ignorant of their resources (or the lack of it), have haughtily set out to compete with others in great enthusiasm and have been broken down in the midst of their campaign. (Kural – 473)

If one who has climbed to the topmost branch of a tree ventures to go up still further, it will result in the end of his life. (Kural – 476)

The term “means” referred to in Kural 675 can also be considered as a reference to the tools or equipment necessary for achieving the goal. The tools can be manufactured gadgets or intellectual tools like a book or anything that would help address the question, “How to achieve the goal?” The “tasks” referred to in Kural 675 are the various steps necessary to accomplish the goal. When the plan includes a careful analysis of the resources, the means, and the tasks, then the questions such as “what?”, “how?” and “who?” would have been addressed.

The next aspect of planning is timing. It is often necessary to do things in the proper order. Doing tasks out of sequence may have undesirable results. The timing aspect is related to the prioritization of the tasks. This is very similar to Stephen Covey's idea about “Put first things first,” which he refers to as “Habit 3” in his popular book, “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.” In the following Kurals, Valluvar emphasizes the importance of the right time for actions. He also re-emphasizes the need for paying attention to the means and place.

Is there anything that is difficult to accomplish, if one acts with the right means at the right time? (Kural – 483)

Even if one aspires to win the whole world, one can do so if one chooses the right time and place for action. (Kural – 484)

Things that may be done at leisure could be implemented slowly and deliberately. But, items requiring prompt action should not be put off even for a moment. (Kural – 672)

Bide your time like the stork for its prey; like the stork striking at its prey at the opportune time, take swift action when the time is right. (Kural – 490)

Finally, the proper place for action may be important in some cases. In the case of a business or real estate venture, choosing the location is considered very important. Military strategists place significant importance on the choice of the location to wage war. Depending on the situation, the location may be crucial for one's own success. So, Valluvar's emphasis on place is not all that irrelevant. In the following Kural, Valluvar uses an interesting metaphor to convey the importance of location:

On a marshy ground where the foot sinks, even a fox can beat a mighty elephant with fearless eyes on his majestic face and two spears of ivory. (Kural – 500)

The annals of military history attribute the defeat of Napoleon when he invaded Russia to poor planning, which resulted in logistics failures, the revolt of the soldiers, and the death of almost 500,000 soldiers out of the 600,000 who marched into Russia. Major failures in Napoleon's planning process were considering the Russian terrain and the severe cold Russian winters. If Napoleon had paid careful attention to timing and location, the result could have been different.

It is true that many ambitious people have failed to achieve their goals due to ill-conceived plans. The five elements that Valluvar identifies as an essential part of the planning process - the resources, means, tasks, timing, and location – have always been crucial ingredients of a successful plan and will continue to be so in the future.

Step 4. Act with persistence

The English author, art critic, and social commentator of the 19th century, John Ruskin, said, "What we think or what we know or what we believe, in the end, is of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do." Just as John Ruskin said, all the ambitious dreams, meaningful goals, and carefully considered plans are useless unless one is ready to act upon them. Ultimately, it is the action

that produces the result. Valluvar is a great proponent of persistent action. To begin with, Valluvar emphasizes total dedication and persistence to one's goals. The intense desire to achieve success will facilitate the actual achievement of success. Valluvar highlights this idea in the following Kurals:

If those who have planned an undertaking possess persistence, they will achieve what they desired as they have desired. (Kural – 666)

It is easy to achieve your goal, provided you keep it in mind persistently. (Kural – 540)

Persistence in the goals will serve as a constant reminder and encourage an individual to put forth more effort to accomplish those goals. Valluvar believes that the reward or the success is in proportion to the effort.

One should not give up by saying "It is impossible." Persistent efforts will lead to success. (Kural – 611)

Even if God does not answer your prayers, your efforts will yield proportionate rewards. (Kural – 619)

From the above, it is clear that Valluvar is a great believer in the human effort to achieve the desired goal. Valluvar is always pragmatic in his approach to all human problems. He is not oblivious to the potential setbacks that one would encounter in the pursuit of one's goal. One could encounter health-related issues, financial difficulties, legal issues, competition, and numerous other unforeseen problems in life that could interfere with the pursuit of one's goals. Occurrences of unforeseen random events - alternately known as fate - often adversely affect one's progress in achieving one's goals. Valluvar's guideline is to pursue the goal with relentless effort even under those circumstances.

Those who work with ceaseless industry will overcome unplanned adverse events (fate). (Kural – 620)

Valluvar also gives us advice as to how to handle adversities. This again is applicable to all adversities in life. First of all, one should realize that it is not unusual to encounter adversities. Therefore,

one should always be mentally prepared to meet the adversities head-on. In fact, Valluvar recommends that when one encounters any kind of adversity, one should laugh at them because there is nothing better than laughter to overcome difficulties in life. These ideas can be found in the following Kurals:

He who does not crave for pleasure and realizes that adversity in life is natural is not affected by adversity. (Kural – 628)

Laugh at adversity; there is nothing better than laughter to overcome adversity. (Kural – 621)

If it appears that Valluvar's approach to overcome difficulties in life and to succeed in the midst of overwhelming adversities is unrealistic, the documented case histories of the extraordinary successes achieved by prominent people should serve us as encouraging examples.

Despite the progressive neurodegenerative disease (known as Lou Gehrig's disease) that has caused muscle weakness and paralysis throughout his adult life, Stephen Hawking (1942 - 2018), the British physicist has made outstanding contributions to physics and cosmology. His book, *A Brief History of Time*, has been a best seller and has sold more than 10 million copies in the past twenty years.

Helen Keller (1880 – 1968) was a deaf, blind, and mute woman. Undaunted by her adversities, she fought an incredibly courageous battle to communicate with the outside world and led a life of accomplishments. She became one of the 20th century's leading humanitarians.

Demosthenes (384 BC – 322 BC), the famous Greek orator of the 4th century B.C., had speech impediments in his early days. It is said that in order to overcome his disability, he used to talk with pebbles in his mouth and recited verses while running. His orations provide an insight into the [politics](#) and culture of [ancient Greece](#).

Soichiro Honda (1906 - 1991) was the son of a blacksmith in Japan. He was always interested in manufacturing. He was not interested in formal education. He became a car mechanic and started his own auto repair shop. Later he started a manufacturing plant to produce piston rings for Toyota cars. During World War II, a US bomber destroyed his plant. He re-built his plant, and it was subsequently demolished by an earthquake. Undaunted by manmade and natural calamities, he went on to start the Honda Motor Cycle Company and eventually built the multi-billion-dollar, multi-national Honda Motor Company. In 1980, *People* magazine placed him on their "25 Most Intriguing People of the Year" and dubbed him as "the Japanese Henry Ford."

Pancreatic cancer, ill-health, and corporate squabble did not deter Steve Jobs (1955 – 2011) from becoming one of the great inventors and marketing geniuses of our time.

Thomas Alva Edison (1847 – 1931) was not discouraged by his 14,000 failed attempts and went on to invent the incandescent light bulb.

In addition to the above-mentioned few, countless other people have realized their dreams by setting proper goals and working with unwavering persistence to overcome formidable adversities. The biographies of these successful people and others like them point to the fact that Valluvar's belief that adversities can be overcome by persistence and success can be achieved despite adversities is not all that naïve and unrealistic.

Step 5. Share the success

In addition to achieving success, Valluvar also expects successful people to share their success with others. According to him, basically, all people are equal. He considers it necessary for an intelligent person to empathize with others' sufferings, and only those who help others can be regarded as truly living.

What benefit does someone derive from his knowledge if he does not treat others' suffering as his own?
(Kural – 315)

He who realizes that he is just like all other human beings is the one who really lives; all others are deemed dead.
(Kural -214)

Therefore, it is clear that Valluvar expects those who have been successful in accumulating wealth to share their wealth with the less fortunate, those who gained knowledge to share their knowledge with others, those who have become successful to share their success in some form or the other with those who are struggling to realize their noble dreams.

Conclusion

Success can be defined as attaining the desired goal. Valluvar proposes a five-step process for achieving success in our lives. Valluvar's process begins with having big dreams, setting relevant goals, planning to achieve those goals, and putting forth persistent hard work in executing the plan. The final step is to

share our success with others seeking success in their lives. The process suggested by Valluvar is general and applicable to all those who want to achieve success in their lives.

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Valluvar on Self-Control over the Senses, Speech, and Behavior

-Dr. R. Prabhakaran



Dr.R.Prabhakaran deserves all of our appreciation for his dedicated propagation of Thirukkural throughout the U.S. by his writings in journals and net and by his speeches in TV and internet continuously for more than two decades. His commentary of Puaranaanuuru is hailed by Tamil scholars. An industrial magnate-turned literary celebrity, he functions just like an one-man university to spread and impart the knowledge of Thirukkural and Sangam classics among the Tamil Diaspora in U.S.

Introduction

Self-control is the ability to control one's emotions and desires and expression of them in one's behavior. There are two aspects to self-control. One aspect of self-control is to control one's desires through effective control of one's mind. The other aspect of self-control is to show restraint in one's behavior towards others. In both cases, self-control implies exercising control over the desires and actions through the mind. As Marcus Aurelius (121 AD – 180 AD), the Roman Emperor, mentions in his book, Meditations, "You have power over your mind - not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength." In other words, the only tool at the disposal of human beings to control their desires, words, and deeds is their mind.

Valluvar emphasizes the importance of controlling one's desire for the gratification of the senses. Also, he warns against hurtful speech and the consequences of careless and vicious speech, including lies. He praises the virtue of self-control and the benefits of exercising self-control in words and actions.

Self-control over the senses

One of the major desires of mankind is the desire for the pleasures experienced by the five senses: sight (vision), hearing (audition), taste (gustation), smell (olfaction), and touch (somatosensation). In order to live happily and enjoy life, it is necessary that all the five sense organs function properly. However, overindulgence in the sense organs causes physical and psychological problems. For example, it is a well-known medical fact that in the case of most

people, overeating leads to obesity, high cholesterol, and cardiovascular diseases. So also, overindulgence in sexual pleasures may cause damage to the tissues, nerves and joints. Also, it is known to weaken the immunity system, cause muscular and nervous pain and promote infection and inflammation. The danger of reckless and unprotected sex is very well-known to everyone. In the case of youngsters, it has been observed that excessive TV watching, playing video games and listening to music may lead to behavioral problems and affect their academic performance. It is an established fact that alcohol, cigarettes, and narcotics cause serious physical and psychological problems. So, moderation in the enjoyment through the use of sense organs should be the goal. In order to practice moderation, one should develop the ability to exercise self-control. Valluvar suggests that by exercising self-control through the mind, one should control one's desires for the gratifications of the five senses. He says one should do this like the tortoise instinctively withdrawing its four legs and head when it senses danger.

Like a tortoise withdrawing its four legs and its head into its shell, those who control their five senses in one life will be guarded in their next seven births. (Kural – 126)

The above Kural echoes the following similar statement from Bhagavad Gita. "He who can withdraw his senses completely from the sense objects like a tortoise withdraws its limbs, his mastery is established." (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Stanza 58)

The mention of "seven births" in the above Kural does not really mean exactly seven births. It simply means several future births. This is akin to someone saying, "I have a million questions in my mind." to imply that he has many questions about something. The above kural is based on Valluvar's belief that the actions in one birth will have consequences in future births (karma theory). The idea behind kural 126 is that the knowledge and experience gained by an individual from controlling the senses in one birth will be helpful to him in future births. It should be noted that Valluvar makes a similar statement regarding learning. He says that "The learning that a man acquires in one birth will be helpful to him in seven births to come (Kural 398)."

The eastern religions assert that desires lead to attachments and attachments result in several reincarnations (or, as Buddhists prefer to call them, several rebirths). In order to break the chain of births and deaths and to attain salvation (nirvana or eternal bliss) one is supposed to control all desires and eventually vanquish all desires and attachments. The following kural shows that Valluvar is in agreement with the idea that one should extricate oneself from all attachments in order to reach a stage of not being born again:

The final release (from births and deaths) comes to those who have severed all attachments. Others will continue to experience more births and deaths. (Kural – 349)

It is indeed very difficult to sever all attachments. It requires enormous willpower and practice. It appears that the idea behind Kural 126 is that those who practice self-control over their senses in one birth will continue to improve upon their experience in the next several births and eventually extricate themselves from all attachments.

Exercising self-control in speech

The sense organ tongue is associated with serving two purposes. One function is to taste, and the other function is to speak. In Kural 126, the tasting ability of the tongue was addressed. In the following Kural, Valluvar discusses the need to control the tongue from the evils arising from speech.

Even if nothing else can be controlled, one must control one's tongue; if not, the speech from the uncontrolled tongue will lead to immense trouble. (Kural – 127)

Valluvar considers 1) hurtful and abusive language, 2) slander, 3) idle talk and 4) lying as the four evils that pertain to the speech. Major motivating factor for using harsh and unkind words could be anger. Therefore, Valluvar warns that people should avoid getting angry at anyone. He says, "Only evil consequences arise out of anger. Therefore, forget about getting angry at anyone (kural – 303)." Envy and jealousy are the most likely causes for indulging in slanderous gossips. It may also be the basic flaw in a person's character that causes him to indulge in slander and or idle talk. Valluvar strongly condemns slander. He says, "It is better to die than to live by lying and slander; for such a death brings with it the fruits of righteousness (Kural – 183)." He is equally critical of those who engage in idle talk. According to him, "Those who engage in idle talk are chaff among men (Kural-196)." He warns against uttering a lie. In fact, he says, "Do not utter falsehood about what your conscience knows to be true; for later, your own conscious will continue to hurt you (Kural – 293)."

An angry word, a hurtful speech, a lie, or an insult uttered by a person offends others, and it remains in their minds for a long time. Valluvar says, "The injury caused by a burn heals, but not the scar that is caused by an offending word (Kural –129)." Valluvar considers all the four kinds of offensive speech as evil. He is of the opinion that since evil results in evil consequences, evil should be feared even more than fire itself (Kural 202). According to him, "Just one hurtful word and its resultant evil, is enough to spoil all the intended good in one's speech (Kural–128)." In view of the disastrous consequences resulting from the mean and malicious speech, Valluvar warns that it is essential that everyone should exercise self-control to guard against them.

Self-Control in the deeds

Valluvar condemns evil deeds as well as evil words. The source of all words (speech) and deeds is the mind. If the mind is pure, then it will be free from all evil thoughts. This is precisely why Valluvar says, "Virtue is nothing but cultivating a mind without blemishes; everything else is an empty show (kural 34)." In order to eliminate the blemishes from the mind, it is necessary to exercise control over the mind. If one can exercise effective self-control and steer the mind away from evil thoughts, then there will be no evil words or deeds.

Self-Control and Humility

According to Valluvar, in addition to practicing self-control over one's words and deeds, one should also proactively exercise self-control and practice humility. He says it is particularly more important for the rich to behave with humility. By virtue of being rich and being powerful, some are likely to look down upon others and behave arrogantly without a trace of humility. He says that humility is an added possession for the wealthy.

Humility is a precious quality in all people. But, it is a priceless possession for the wealthy. (Kural – 125)

The same idea was expressed by Saadi of Shiraz (1213 AD– 1291 AD), who was a prominent Persian poet and a literary scholar during the 13th century. One of his aphorisms is as follows: The beloved of the Almighty are the rich who have the humility of the poor.

Benefits of self-control

Self-control helps an individual to curb his desires for sensual gratification. He who exercises self-control will also avoid offending others through his speech. Furthermore, self-control also helps an individual to restrain his anger, and causing physical and mental harm to others. The persistent practice of self-control in one's words and deeds will help one to gain the respect of others. In fact, Valluvar says, "If one exercises self-control with knowledge and intent, one will gain the esteem of others (Kural- 123)." One who consistently practices self-control will also learn to become humble. Valluvar admires a man who excels in self-control by saying, "The grandeur of a man who consistently exercises self-control is more imposing than a lofty mountain (Kural – 124)." He adds, "Self-control places one among the gods; lack of it will lead to utter darkness (kural – 121)." A man of limited learning may be humble in the midst of well-learned people. Sometimes, some people who are known for their knowledge may not be very humble. If one is well-learned and still exercises self-control to control his anger, he will be benefited by his own virtuous qualities. Valluvar personifies virtue as an anthropomorphic entity and says, "Virtue waits for the right time to help a man of knowledge, who exercises self-control and controls his anger. (Kural –130)." Dr. S. M. Diaz comments that the idea expressed by Valluvar in Kural 130 is very similar to the statement, "The spirit of God is delighted to dwell in the hearts of the humble." made by Desiderius Erasmus Rotterdamus (1466 AD -1536 AD) (also known as Erasmus of Rotterdam) who was a Dutch renaissance humanist, Catholic priest, teacher and a theologian.

Conclusion

Exercising self-control in one's speech, deeds, and acting with humility towards others is indeed a very laudable quality that results in many benefits. Because of this, Valluvar considers self-control a valuable treasure worth cherishing.

Guard your self-control as a precious treasure, for there is no greater wealth in life than that.

(Kural – 122)

Significance of Numbers in Thirukural by great legend Thiruvalluvar

-Ms. *Sarajah*

This article has focused on the greatness of Thiruvalluvar, a Tamil Poet and main focus on the basis of significance of numbers in his literature Thirukkural. The number theory and mathematics scientifically proven/discovered later has a place in this literature beyond imagination in those years and hence an attempt.

In Tamil, the great poet Thiruvalluvar has a significant place in literature as he is the author of the great Thirukkural which is also called Ulaga Podhu Marai (universal veda) as Marai is an equivalent word of Vedha in Tamil.

The Thirukkural has a credit of many translations in different languages next to Bible, Quran but religious versions claim Gita of India has maximum translations next to Bible and Tao Te Ching of China has maximum translations next to Bible and Gita. But these clearly proved that it has more translations in many languages as well as many times in same language by different authors. Also there are commentaries to

this work have been done by many and popular among them is Parimelagar in Tamil. And a recent one if released by son of V.O.Chidambaranar, independence activist in 2008. The first translated version in English is by GU Pope in 1886 which had taken Thirukkural to western world.

Since the poet is from Tamil Nadu, he and his work Thirukkural has been honoured in Tamil Nadu many ways. 1. Valluvar Kottam has been built in Chennai. 2. Statue has been erected in Kanyakumari in the midst of water. 3. State government transport vehicles will have a display with one Thirukkural on it. Recently, the honour has been extended by Central Government by taking it into the School with a start of competition and there may be introduction of the same in the syllabus. Already the honors are there in other lands like, in France where in a Railway station, the French version of Thirukkural has been displayed in a train. Also statue at UK in University of London Campus and Statue in the neighbourhood state Karnataka in Bangalore are some more honors to specify.

As there are many controversies with his birth details like when he has born and mostly declared as between 1st A.D and 3rd A.D. and also place of birth between Chennai and Kanyakumari in TN. Also claims of Shaivites and Bhuddists of their own have proved about the controversy of the great poet with his biography details but his Thirukkural has place in Universe. To add, recent controversies in Tamil Nadu that from the year 1973 on the basis of Scholars met in 1921 and subsequent happenings in 1954, Thai 2 (that is it may be January 15 or 16, next day of Makara Sankaranthi) as a birth date and from that year onwards, Tamil Nadu has another Calendar with Thiruvalluvar Year, accounting 31 years before Christ. But before this, his birth day was celebrated according to the tradition of star celebration on Vaikashi Anusham every year. There are some more work in Tamil literature in later years and people have two versions, it may be from the same author or from different author with same name.

Significance of Numbers in Thirukkural

The ancient work of Tamil literature has 4 divisions called, Padhinen Mel Kanakku (transliteration in English is 18 upper sums inclusive of two (Patthu Pattu(transliteration in English is 10 songs+ ettuThogai(transliteration in English 8 groups), PathinenKeel Kanakku(transliteration in English is 18 lower sums), Imperumkappiyangal(transliteration in English is 5 bigger epics), Imsirukappiyangal (transliteration in English is 5 smaller epics) where every division has a significance with numbers, first and second being 18 and third and fourth being 5 and Thirukkural has been accommodated in the second Pathinen Keel Kanakku.

The celebrating thing in Kural is Rhythm and it has structured in the format of Venba and this is the only one in the entire Tamil Literature and also written as couplet(two lines). In any other translation, the rhythm

is absent except one by P.S. Sundaram, he has maintained the same tempo of original rhyme in many places of his transliterated version.

I wanted to portray this article on the basis of numbers presents in Thirukural, in the olden days itself.

To start with, he himself portrays the mathematics in his Kural,

Ennenba enai ezhuthenba ivirandum

Kanenba Vazhum uyirku.

Meaning

Mathematics and Literature are the two eyes for human beings and there are different places where the numbers has significance in his literature Thirukural.

English transliteration as given by scholars is

Men who learning gain have eyes, men say;

Blockheads' faces pairs of sores display

Also one commentary proves another significance to number 7 with his vast ocean of knowledge in his work as

Kadukaith thulaiththu Ezh kadalaip puguththi

KuRukath thariththa kuRal

Meaning

Contemporary poet have compared each couplet to a tiny mustard seed which has seven seas of knowledge in it. The book is in the form of couplets follows venba(metric) pattern.

Structure of couplets

The couplets has seven cirs(which is a single or combination of tamil word which may be seen from the title as Thirukural=Thiru+kural where Thiru is amalgamated with the word kural), with four in the first line and three in the second line . It contains 133 chapters, which is a product of 7 and 19 and each chapter contains 10 couplets with a total of 1330 couplets. Again the number 1330 is equal to 7 x 19 x 10.

The whole 1330 is divided by 3 sections(which is called 'muppai' in tamil, which is called trivarga in Sanskrit) naming arathupaal (righteousness), porutpaal (wealth), kamathupaal (love). These are further divided into subdivisions called 'Iyal' in tamil and there are 7 iyals after Kadavul Valthu (for God). Each Iyal is further subdivided into smaller divisions called 'Adhikarangal'. Hence, there are 7 iyals, 133 Adhikarams and 10 couplets in each Adhikaram amounting to 1330 couplets. We can the significance of 7 his work, that is 133 being (1+3+3=7), 1330 being (1+3+3+0).

There are 40 couplets on God which is inclusive of nature like rain. Virtue and ascetics.

200 couplets on domestic virtue,140 couplets on grace, 100 couplets on Ministers,220 couplets on administration, 250 couplets on love and passion, 130 couplets on moral values in all the three sections

together and if we take three sections separately we have 380 couplets in arathupaal(righteousness/law), 700 couplets in porutpaal (wealth/politics), and 250 couplets in kamathupaal (desire/love).

Numbers found in the couplets

1 is in the couplet 1196 along with 2

2 is in couplets 581, 662,1091

3 is in 589,684,941,952

4 in 35th couplet and 513

5 in 25, 343, 675, 939, 983

6 in 560th couplet

7 in 62, 107, 398, 835, 1269

8 in 9th couplet

10 in 450th couplet

The number crore too available in some of the couplets 816,954,1005 and 1061, Ten crore is in 817 and seventy crore is in 639.

Other numeric names in Thirukkural

The thirukkural which has a measure height in the couplet

Vellathanaya malar neetam maandhartham

Ullathanaya vuyarvu

Meaning

The height of the stem is determined by the water level.

Likewise attitude makes one`s altitude.

English transliteration as given by scholars is

With rising flood the rising lotus flower its stem unwinds;

The dignity of men is measured by their minds

Thus the great literature Thirukkural can be portrayed as a significance of numbers too and here is a small attempt to pay a tribute. We can also say every Adhikaram(each of 10 couplets) and each couplet has 7 cirs which may be represented as 7 x 10 metric feet also, and thus all 1330 couplets has 9310 metric feet again with a significance of 7 x 7 x 19 x 10.

The significance of 7 is present almost in his work and the number of Adhikarams 133 which is 7 x 19 which may be compared with the same miracle of 7 along with 19 shown in Bible and quran which are always portrayed as 19 x 7 as a combination of two prime numbers.

Courtesy: <https://www.indiastudychannel.com/resources/1664...>

A Historical study on Thirukural with special reference to Economic and Management concepts, issues and challenges

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Introduction:

Thiruvalluvar's Thirukural has today come to be documented as a classic in the literature of the entire world. In Tamil "Thiru" means "holy" or "sacred," and "Kural" means a short poem.

Thirukural is in a couplet form and each Kural is composed of 7 words spread across 2 lines (4 & 3 words). In fact, it is the shortest form of poetry in the Tamil language.

Thirukkural was written by Thiruvalluvar, who is believed to have born years before Jesus Christ.

The Tamil Calendar is dated from that period and referred as Thiruvalluvar Aandu (Year). We find Thiruvalluvar as a moral philosopher, political scientist and master of public administration in the first two parts of Thirukkural. We find him to be a creative artist in the third part, depicting

the fascinating aspects of lovers. Thirukkural's immortality and universality are unquestionable.

Its ethics and values are applicable to all religions, countries and time. It has been translated in over 60 languages of the world. This paper attempts to throw light on these fundamental

concepts and bring the Indian thought on the relationship among supply, demand and price,

Wealth, Education, HRM, Finance from Thirukkural which is more than 2000 years old

but yet relevant even to this day! It also proposes four basic economic laws from Thirukkural.

Sangam Literature:

Thirukural is a discourse on the art of living, a set of healthy principles of the guidance's for the variety of segments of the civilization for a pleasant-sounding combined living. Thirukural

belonged to the epoch of Sangam literature. Tamil Sangam was a 'court of the congregation of poets held under the patronage of a King. The poems belonging to the Sangam literature were composed by Tamil poets, both men and women, from various professions and classes of society. This literature created by these assemblies was accumulated in the period straddling over 600 AD.

Thirukkural:

Thirukural, the treasures of knowledge, wisdom, and beauty which are enclosed in her literature, philosophy, art, and synchronized life are too valued to be lost. Mankind needs to use them, if

he/she is to be a cultured person of modern society. In fact, it is the shortest form of poetry in the Tamil language. The work on knowledge is separated into three major chapters - those that

speak about Virtue, Wealth and Love. The first part deals with Aram (Virtue), the moral value of human life. It has 38 chapters. The second part is on Porul (Wealth), the socio economic values of men in a civilized society. It has 70 chapters. The third part is on Kamam or Inbam (Love), the psychological values of life. It has 25 chapters. Each chapter in this book elucidates a different aspect of human virtue or human fault. Thirukkural is a cir formed by combining the two words Thiru and Kural, i.e. Thiru + Kural = Thirukkural. Thiruvalluvar and His Philosophy: There is certain likeness between Valluvar's thought and those of Buddha, Mahaveera, Plato, Confucius, Kautalya and Vatsayna, these are only justifiable absorptions by a subsequent thinker of ideas, of which he approves from among those that have preceded him and are available to him, or natural similarities in the working of great minds. But there are also basic differences and substantial originality of thought and expression for ahead of his times, particularly in respect of his treatment of Godliness, casteless society, importance of agriculture, taxation with peoples' consent and enabling of physical love. That is the reason why Thiruvalluvar's Thirukural has continued to attract the best minds of the world down the ages. This Holy Book is indicated in some of the other names by which the text is known: Tamil marai (Tamil Veda); Poyya mozhi (word that does not lie); and Teyva nool (divine book), 'Muppai (Three fold path)', Pothu Marai (the common Veda or Creed) etc. Palm Leaf Manuscript: Palm leaf is the paper of ancient world. Manuscripts made out of dried palm leaves were served as the paper of the ancient world in parts of Asia as far back as the fifteenth century BC. The significance of this is that the greatness of a work is realized on the basis of not the weight of its manuscript (written on Palm leaves) but the divine qualities of the work which forced the plank to stay afloat. It is said that to the amazement of the critics, the Sangam Plank shrunk itself in size to hold only the Kural manuscript and in the process throwing out the rest. Economics and Management in Thirukural: Western world has published a lot on history of economics...how it all started with Adam Smith, went on with Ricardo to age of John Maynard Keynes , Milton Freidman and presently Paul Krugman. We Indians also have been a good follower of Lord Macaulay's system of education and rarely look into what has happened to India before that period. 1800 years earlier (than Adam Smith) a bearded man from Mylapore (in Chennai) has spoken about the basic tenets of life which includes economics. He dedicated a whole set of 700 two-liners talking about wealth in simple ways. All economic problems take their reason to the basic economic variables namely demand and supply of products/services. Thus the first laws in 51 ABBS South Indian Business History modern economics become the Law of Demand and the Law of Supply along with the Say's Law. Conceptual clarity is essential for solving economy's problems. This focuses on 1. Economics and political ideas in Thirukural (Good Governance) 2. Cost Benefit Analysis 3. Employment 4. Education 5. Rules of Law 6. Management Techniques and Decision Making Process 7. Prosperity of a country 8. Removal of poverty 9. Treatise on Wealth 10. Agriculture 11. Water Management Economics and Political Ideas (Good Governance): The economic as well as political ideas of Thiruvalluvar are found in Part II of Thirukkural, which is on Wealth (Porul). An attempt is made to understand and appreciate Thiruvalluvar's socio-economic and political ideas under fifteen topics and discover their relevance and

application to our time. • He is a true king who sticks to virtue, Removes evils, and is spotless in valour. “A king is one who possesses the following six things: an army, a people, wealth, ministers, friends and a fortress; he never fails in the following four qualities: fearlessness, liberty, wisdom and energy; he is a man of modesty and virtues, and refrains from all vices” This section is a lesson on good governance. There are three sources of income to the king: unclaimed wealth, taxes which subjects pay, and customs collection from foreigners. In Valuvar’s world, there were three channels of equitable distribution of wealth: Defence; Public works and Social service. These three cover the legitimate public expenditure for distribution. Cost Benefit Analysis: Cost Benefit Analysis is a systematic process for calculating and comparing benefits and costs of a project, decision or government policy. This concept is discussed by Thiruvallur in his Versa 478 – No harm if income is narrow if outgoing are not broad. It is an excellent principle of public finance and financial administration: “ If the revenue of the State are limited, the king should keep the expenditure within bounds”. Our failure in economic development in India reflects our inefficient planning, administration and implementation at different levels. Employment: Employment is a contract between two parties, one being the employer and the other being the employee. The concept of employment is discussed in versa 513 – Loyalty, wisdom, a clear head and contentment – These four well-possessed are the right qualification. Valluvar speaks of right man for right job. Those who are employed should have: pleasing nature to do good; ability to enlarge the resources, increase wealth and prevent calamities. They must be men of wisdom and endurance; their conduct must be examined daily by the king, because their conduct influences the world “if they act crookedly, the world will also act crookedly. Education: He discuss the importance of education in Chapter-40 & Chapter- 43 – Learn well what should be learnt, and then Live your learning 52 ABBS South Indian Business History Here Thiruvalluvar emphasized that Let a man learn thoroughly whatever he may learn, and let his conduct be worthy of his learning. – Those who have wisdom have all Fools with all have nothing. Those who possess wisdom possess everything; those who do not have wisdom, whatever they may possess, have nothing. Rules of Law: In this he explains as to how the king should rule the country. In (559) – Where a king is unjust Rains are withheld. Valluvar emphasized the Rule of Law. “When there is rain, the world enjoys prosperity; when the king rules with justice, his subjects prosper” In other words “ As is the world without rain, so is the country with unjust government”. If the king and his rule ensure “just government”, his kingdom will surely be blessed with seasonal rains and rich harvest, which never fail . Management Technique and Decision Making Process: Decision making process is one of the important functions of the entrepreneur. In Chapter-68 – The end of deliberation is decision: To decide and dawdle is bad After considerable thought, planning and analysis, one arrives at a decision. Once a decision is taken, any hesitation or delay is suicidal. Prosperity of a Country: If a country wants to attain prosperity, three factors play a important role land, capital and labour. This concept was explained by Thiruvalluvar in Chapter 74 – Tireless farmers, learned men and honest traders Constitute a country. Three factors are indispensable: farmers (Land), merchants (Capital) and virtuous people (Labour). Valluvar’s economic thought includes what later economic thinkers like Adam Smith (1776) and Alfred Marshal (1880)

proposed as factors of production – Land, Labour, Capital and Organization. Removal of Poverty: One of the important hindrance of an economy is poverty. Thiruvallvar discussed this in Chapter 74 & Chapter 105. – An ideal land is free of hunger Pestilence and war. Valluvar also speaks of the vital need of freedom from hunger and disease (“Garibi Hatao”), and from foreign invasions. A prosperous nation is one in which there is plentiful harvest, industrial productivity with agricultural inputs, and consequent abundance of production and wealth. – There is nothing like poverty But poverty. The evils of poverty are personified in kurals as a sinner and a demon. When the demon takes possession of a person, the latter loses all joy in life. “Poverty is cruel; it afflicts people; “one may sleep in the midst of fire; but by no means in the midst of poverty”. – The misery of poverty attracts and includes Various miseries. We are living in a very challenging environment. 20% of People enjoying 80% of income and vice versa. Besides the critical global problem of poverty, the demographic disequilibrium is another challenge to be faced now. Wealth: In Chapter 76 he discussed the concept of wealth – *There is nothing like wealth*

To make the worthless worthy

This chapter is a treatise on wealth, which reminds us of Adam Smith’s “Wealth of Nation.”

According to Valluvar wealth is productive of the joys of this world. “Wealth makes people important”.

Wealth acquired with proper means will yield virtues and happiness; All despise the poor, but all praise the rich; All honor the poor man when he become rich; Wealth like taxes belong to the government; There is no sharper weapon than wealth to destroy the arrogance of one’s enemies.– The hoarder deluded that wealth was all Haunts it as a ghost when dead.

“He who hoards wealth and does not enjoy it or utilize it to benefit others, is as good as dead and his wealth is a waste”.

Agriculture:

One of the important occupations of India is Agriculture. At present 52% of people in India is depending on agriculture sector. – Ploughmen are the earth’s axle-pin; they carry the entire world. Valluvar says that the world depends on agriculture. “Though laborious, agriculture is the best form of craft that sustains all on earth and is the worthiest of crafts. Farmers are the lynchpin of the world; they alone are independent citizens, others are dependent on them.

Water Management:

Water management is the activity of planning, developing, distributing and managing the optimum use of water resources. In an ideal world, water management planning has regard to all the competing demands for water and seeks to allocate water on an equitable basis to satisfy all uses and demands. This is rarely possible in practice. Valluvar explained this in Chapter 104.

– Manure more than plough, and after weeding

Guard more than water

“ Valluvar has emphasized the importance of agriculture and its primacy over all other occupations. One can also find in the Kurals the elements of “Green Revolution” except high yielding variety of seeds: extent of ploughing, manure and fertilizers, water-management, weeding at the right time, and protection against pests and diseases.

Conclusion:

From the above study, it can be appreciated that Thirukkural is one of the finest and fantastic piece of poetical literature ever written. “Thirukkural has been acclaimed as one of the most precious jewels in world literature. The lofty ideals enshrined in Thirukkural transcend the barriers of race, creed, country and time. It carries with it the comprehensive philosophy of life for all ages. It covers almost every aspect of life in short poems.

This literary marvel written by Sage Thiruvalluvar containing of 1330 couplets is noted for its brevity, rich meaning, breadth of vision and choice of diction, all at once noble and elevating.

Erudite contemporary Poets and the great Kings of those days acknowledged the literary greatness of this masterpiece imparting Self- Development Skills, Communication and Public Speaking Skills, Family Management and Parenting Skills, Right Attitudes towards Work, Wealth, Friends and Enemies, Managerial Skills and Good Governance and the skills to make one an ethical and reputed person.

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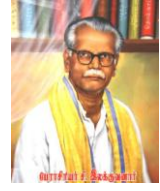
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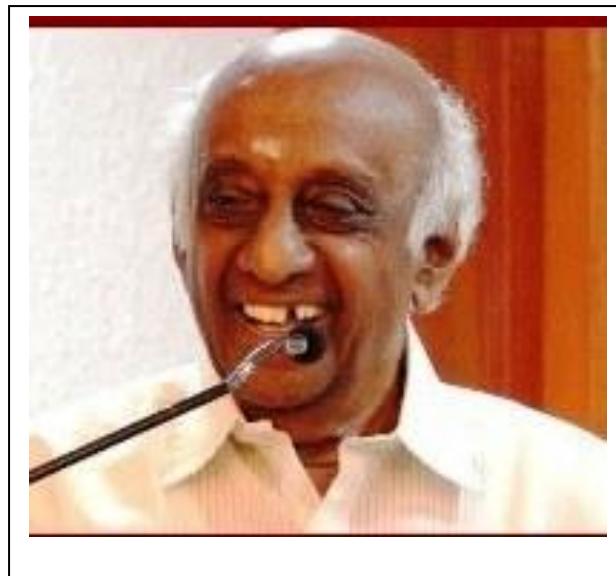
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STILL YOU ARE OUR LEADING LIGHT, SIR!



The first time he made us shed tears.

15-4-1934 ---

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Who is there to guide us to futuristic and positive steps for the growth of Tamil?

Our Honorary Editor and my mentor, Prof.K.N.Chitsabesan has passed away leaving us in the lurch lamenting in the darkness which prevail everywhere in his absence. Who is there to guide us to futuristic and positive steps for the growth of Tamil? Can you find anybody like him who mingles with the younger generation without assuming any seniority posture?

Every Tamilian aged more than fifty will surely identify and revere the scholar who is popularly known as a silver-tongued orator, through radio and TV always presiding literary debates. Right from my Pre-university course at Thigarajar College, Madurai during 1962-63 where I had the privilege as a student of this brilliant scholar, I am addicted to his thought-provoking lectures. Born in a small town Devakottai in the most southern part of Tamilnadu in the year 1934, our Honorary Editor and my mentor, Prof.K.N.Chitsabesan,had his schooling locally. Even in his early school days, he had cultivated a strong taste for Tamil literature thro' his Tamil veteran teacher Arangakrishnan. Took his B.A. degree thro' Loyola College, Chennai and took his Masters Degree from the University of Madras thro' Presidency College Chennai and secured the Second Rank in the University. Here he had the proud privilege of being the favourite student of Tamil Veterans Dr.Mu.Varadarajanar and The.Po. Meenakshisundaranar. He was appreciated by both of them.

Immediately after his studies,he joined Thigarajar College, Madurai, as Lecturer in Tamil. He had the fine opportunity of serving with the Tamil stalwarts like Dr. Ilakkuvanar,

Dr.A.Chidambaranatha Chettiar , Dr.Maa. Rajamanickananar, Avvai Doraisamy Pillai and A.Ki.Paranthamanar. His work was greatly appreciated by all his seniors and admired by all his juniors. He had cultivated the art of public speaking besides giving lectures in the class rooms. He participated in many Tamil forums and literary debates dearly called Pattimandrams in Tamil. Here he spoke under the chairmanship of great Tamil Scholars like Tamil Kadal Raya.Sockalinganar,Kl.Vaa,Jagannnathan,ProfessorsSrinivasaraghavan,A.Sa.Gnanasambandan, Thavithiru Kundrakkudi Adigalar. Then in course of time he was elevated as the chairman of these forums. He also groomed his famous students for these Pattimandrams and seminars. To mention a few of them Padmasri. Solomon Paappiah, Professors Ku.Gnanasambandan, Abdhul Kader, Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar, Mu.Metha and Tha. Rajaram. His other renowned students who had left us already are Ka.Kalimuthu former Speaker of Tamilnadu Legislative Assembly, Kavingarkal Naa.Kamarajan, Inkulab, Prof Tha.Ku. Subramanian and to crown them all Dr.Justice AR.Lakshmanan the former Judge of The Supreme Court of India. He had travelled in and abroad the country for delivering Tamil Speeches and presiding over many Tamil Debates. The countries visited by him are Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, Srilanka, UK, UAE, and the US. He is known for his comparative quotations of English Literature which practice he feels will only enhance the greatness of Tamil Literature. His other specialty is blending humor in his lectures. He had earned a covetous title “Nagaichuvai Imayam” meaning 'the humorist surpassing mount Everest' from the stalwart of Tamil Religious Discourses Thirumuruga Kirupananada Variar. He humbly declared that his motto is “Pleasure to all and malice toward none”. He proudly declared that he is going strong at the age of 88 only because of his

unquivering taste for Tamil literature. He acted as an inspiring source for the younger generation.

He had left us his charming words of encouragement and highly motivating mission which is unparalleled. If we strive our best efforts to the progress of our language and literature he will be our leading light and perennial source of inspiration surely!





A pleasant moment! Honouring my Professor at Y.M.C.A.Pattimanram.



At Chennai International Airport proceeding to Kuala Lumpur to attend International conference on Childrens Tamil literature

Valluvar on Love and Compassion

Thirukkuralar Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Introduction

The English word “love” has many interpretations. Some would say that it is a feeling, whereas others may say it is an emotion. It is also often described as “chemistry, passion, commitment, affection, attachment, attraction,” and so on. The real meaning of the word “love” depends on the context. Some may use the word to describe their feelings towards God, whereas others may use it to express their feelings about their romantic partner. There are people who would even use the word to describe their feelings towards their pet or even an inanimate object. It is also often used as a synonym for the word “like.”

Valluvar’s Ideas on Love

In the context of the Kural, the word “love” is used to describe the affection, concern, and kindness for one’s family members, friends, relatives, and other acquaintances. In the Chapter on Love, Valluvar asserts the following:

Love is the quintessence of life; without it, a man is nothing but a frame of bones covered with skin.

(Kural – 80)

Love is the one thing that binds the body with life.

(Kural – 73)

The above two kural emphasize that love is the essential ingredient that sustains life in the human body. In other words, one without love is not really alive. Valluvar reemphasizes in the following kural that even if one has all the parts of his body functioning properly, if his heart is without love, his external organs are really useless:

If a man’s heart is devoid of love, to what avail are his external organs? (Kural – 79)

In all the above kural, Valluvar conveys that inherently everyone has the ability to love. According to him, love is part of basic human nature. As Mahatma Gandhi says, “Where there is love, there is life.” However, love is often overshadowed by other emotions such as anger, selfishness and jealousy and so on. The idea is that one should find love in one’s heart and cherish it and reflect it in all his interactions with others. The truly happy people are those who love others. Such a life of love is indeed very rewarding. Again, according to Valluvar,

The bliss the joyous people enjoy in this world is said to be the fruit of life with love towards others.

(Kural – 75)

Other well-known writers and thinkers express similar ideas regarding love. For example, the author, motivational speaker, and Professor Leo Buscaglia says, “Love is life. And if you miss love, you miss life.” Also, the importance of love is eloquently described by the famous Irish playwright, novelist, and essayist Oscar Wilde when he says, “Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden where the flowers are dead.”

It is love that binds the families together. The love between husband and wife and their love towards their children is the foundation for happiness in family life. It is love that inspires a family member to make sacrifices for his loved ones. Valluvar says,

Those without love in their heart will keep all they have to themselves. The ones with love in their heart will give away even their bones to their loved ones. (Kural – 72)

In addition to the love towards the family members, one's love towards one's acquaintances tends to create a desire in their welfare, and that results in the excellence of friendship (kural – 74). In other words, casual acquaintances may turn into lasting friendships because of love. One's love towards others is often reciprocated by others, and thus love begets love. Love among family members and love among the members of a community fosters the overall happiness and camaraderie in a society.

Extension of Love

As the Greek philosopher Aristotle observes, “Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient and therefore does not partake of society is either a beast or a god.” In reality, man is neither a beast nor a god. He is part and parcel of society. People are interdependent on each other for their survival. So, how should a man who loves his family and friends behave towards other people? What does Valluvar say about a man's attitude towards other members of society? While Valluvar uses the word “love” in a narrow sense to mean the affection, attachment, and kindness among family members, relatives, friends, and other acquaintances, he defines “compassion” as the offspring of love (Kural – 757). This compassion, as described by Valluvar, is the hallmark of universal and unconditional love towards all living beings, including human beings. According to Valluvar, compassion is the extension of love, and one should act with compassion towards all living beings.

Sympathy, Empathy, and Compassion

Although the words “sympathy,” “empathy,” and “compassion” denote the tendency, practice, or capacity to share the feelings of others, especially their pain and suffering, there are essential differences among them. The feelings of sympathy and empathy are the precursors to compassion. Sympathy is the awareness of another person's pain and suffering, requiring our attention so that it can be alleviated. In the case of sympathy, the emphasis is on awareness coming into the knowledge that there is another person whose situation is deserving of our attention and that there is some element of pain and suffering that that person is experiencing. One can have sympathy for a wounded dog, suffering child, grieving friend, or anyone experiencing any kind of pain and suffering. Having sympathy does not necessarily mean that it will be followed by action to alleviate the pain and suffering. While the focus of sympathy is awareness, empathy focuses on experiencing others' pain and suffering as our own. Empathy is the attempt of one who is self-aware to understand and even vicariously experience another person's situation and emotional state. A doctor may have sympathy for a child's suffering. But, a mother will have empathy for her child's suffering because she can truly experience the child's suffering as her own. Compassion is taking a step further, where a person feels empathy and then tries to take actions to alleviate the suffering of the other person. The emphasis here is on action. Having compassion for another person requires one to put the other person first, imagine what the person is going through, and then consider ways in which to help the person feel better and cope up with the situation.

Valluvar questions the utility of one's wisdom if one cannot treat others' suffering as one's own (Kural - 315). For Valluvar, the awareness of others' pain and suffering (sympathy) and treating them as one's own (empathy) should lead to compassion. For him, compassion is the most important quality in a human being. He says, “The world exists because of the existence of the uniquely beautiful quality of compassion (kural - 571).” More recently, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan people's spiritual leader, echoed the same sentiment when he said, “Compassion is a necessity, not a luxury. Without it, humanity cannot survive.”

Compassion and the Golden Rule

Karen Armstrong OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire), FRSL (Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature) is a British author and commentator well known for her books on comparative religion. In her book, *12 Steps to a More Compassionate Life*, she says that the fundamental principle of compassion is the Golden Rule: “Do unto others what you would want others to do unto you.” Although this Golden Rule is often attributed to the Chinese Philosopher Confucius (551 BC – 479 BC), the same idea can be found in all religions and ethical traditions. This Golden Rule can also be restated as a negative injunction: “Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you.” The positive version of the Golden Rule

stresses what a compassionate person should do, and the negative version emphasizes the actions he should avoid.

Valluvar and the Golden Rule

Valluvar's ideas on virtues cover both versions of the above-stated Golden Rule. For example, when Valluvar talks about hospitality (Chapter 9), speaking in a kind and gentle manner (Chapter 10), being thankful to others for their acts of kindness (Chapter 11), being equitable and impartial (Chapter 12), exercising self-control (Chapter 13), possessing decorum (Chapter 14), having forbearance (Chapter 16) being fearful of evil (Chapter 21), realizing social responsibility (Chapter 22), helping the poor by practicing charity (Chapter 23), compassion (Chapter 25) and being truthful (Chapter 30), he stresses the positive version of the Golden Rule. When Valluvar advocates the avoidance of the following qualities and activities, he is really implying the negative version of the Golden Rule: adulterous thoughts and actions (Chapter 15), envy (Chapter 17), covetousness (Chapter 18), slander (Chapter 19), futile speech (Chapter 20), meat-eating (Chapter 26), being an impostor (Chapter 28), fraud (Chapter 29), anger (Chapter 31), violence (Chapter 32), and killing (Chapter 33). Some of the virtues delineated by Valluvar are about pro-active patterns of good behavior, whereas others are significant acts of compassion aimed at alleviating the pain and suffering of others. For example, a person practicing the virtue of speaking in a kind and gentle manner may be considered to be nice, polite and courteous to others. However, such a virtue cannot be considered an act of compassion. On the other hand, virtues such as hospitality, charity and philanthropy are acts of compassion, and they have a significant impact upon society and help those who are suffering from hunger, poverty, illness and other similar miseries. Nonviolence and non-killing are extremely compassionate virtues that help to combat cruelty and harm to other living beings.

Hospitality

During the days of Valluvar, there were no hotels where travelers could stay and there were no restaurants for travelers to eat on their way. They depended upon the hospitality of the local families for lodging and boarding in the areas where they traveled. Therefore, helping travelers and even strangers was considered a great virtue and duty of those leading a family life. In the context of the Kural, the term "guests" means strangers. Entertaining and being hospitable to friends and family members were considered an essential aspect of the culture and therefore not considered special virtues. However, hospitality to strangers was certainly considered an act of compassion by Valluvar.

The only purpose of family life is to entertain guests and exercise hospitality.

(Kural -

81)

Even the nectar of immortality should not be consumed without sharing with guests waiting outside.

(Kural – 82)

Differences between Charity and Philanthropy

Although the terms “charity” and “philanthropy” are often used interchangeably, there are some differences between the two. Charity tends to be a short-term, emotional, immediate response focused primarily on rescue and relief measures, whereas philanthropy is much more long-term, more strategic, and focused on rebuilding and permanent solutions to societal problems. For example, a person or an organization engaged in charitable work may provide food and shelter to a homeless person. Whereas a philanthropist or a philanthropic organization would focus attention to address the root causes of homelessness so that such situations can be avoided. Generally, in the case of charity, there is direct contact between those who need help and those who provide help. In the case of philanthropy, there may not be any direct connection between the helper and those who receive help. Valluvar places importance to charity as well as philanthropy.

Charity

Valluvar is a firm believer in the equality of all people. He declares, “All human beings are equal by birth; but distinctions arise only because of different qualities of their actions (kural – 972).” He also says, “Only those who realize that they are part and parcel of the society are the ones who are really alive. All others are deemed dead. (214).” This concept of equality and the inherent ability to identify with all human beings are expected to induce empathy for others’ pain and suffering. Valluvar is of the opinion that this empathy should lead to compassion, and in turn, compassion should result in actions to relieve others’ pain and suffering. In some cases, compassion may result in charity aimed to help individuals, and in other cases, it may be in the form of philanthropy focused more on long-term and strategic activities to solve societal problems. To him, charity is nothing but helping the poor. There is nothing crueler than not being able to help the poor. These ideas can be found in the following kural:

To give to the needy alone is charity. All the rest is an investment in anticipation of a return.

(Kural – 221)

The removal of the fatal hunger of the destitute is the right place to deposit one’s wealth.

(Kural - 226)

Nothing is as painful as death. Even death will become sweet if charity cannot be exercised.

(Kural – 230)

In life, there is nothing more worthwhile than to be recognized for charity to the poor. (Kural – 231)

Philanthropy

Valluvar is of the opinion that “God has not created anyone to beg for his survival and in case He had done so, he should come down to this earth and wander like a beggar and perish (kural – 1062).” Valluvar’s view of the world is that everyone should have the opportunity to earn a livelihood and to live with dignity. In fact, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that everyone has such an opportunity. But, in many countries, the governments are unable to provide the help needed by their citizens. Even in the wealthiest of all nations of the world, the USA, there is a staggering number of homeless people and an increasing number of people who are living below the poverty line. Although the government has the duty to ensure the welfare of its citizens, there are always situations where the government cannot address all the problems of all the people. Many non-governmental organizations and kind-hearted compassionate volunteers and donors are needed to collaborate and complement the efforts of the government to address the crisis of poverty and other social issues in many countries. Valluvar believes everyone has a social responsibility to help their fellow human beings. He seems to trust the compassion of the individuals rather than the bureaucratic machinery of the government to address societal problems. So, Valluvar is not off the mark when he emphasizes the role of individuals to be compassionate and helpful to those who need help. According to Valluvar, “All the wealth gained through hard work is for doing service to the deserving people (kural - 212).”

Valluvar proposes three models for practicing philanthropy. The first model is the “Fresh Water Lake Model.” Here, “The wealth of a man of eminent knowledge who loves the world and wants to exercise benevolence is like a lake with fresh drinking water (kural – 215).” In other words, his wealth will provide a perennial supply of benefits to the needy people, like a tank with drinking water that supplies water to all the people all the time. This type of philanthropy offers the maximum benefit to a large number of people for a very long time. For example, modern philanthropic foundations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, McArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, and other such large foundations have large sums of money in the bank, and the interest obtained from the capital is used to benefit those who seek assistance. Since the capital is never used, this type of foundation can provide help to a large number of people for a very long time.

Next is the “Fruit Tree model.” In this case, “The wealth of a very benevolent philanthropist is like a fruit tree in the middle of a town (kural – 216).” The fruit tree supplies fruits to a fairly large number of people for a specific period of time. When the fruit season is over, those who need the fruit from the tree will have to wait till the following season. Practitioners of this type of philanthropy provide help when there is money and when there is no money, they wait until more funds are available. Examples of this type of

philanthropy would include modern philanthropic organizations like the United Way, Red Cross, and other organizations which depend upon donations from the donors and provide benefits as long as funds are available and wait until more funds are available to render additional services.

The last model suggested by Valluvar is the “Medicinal Tree Model.” “The wealth of a truly magnanimous philanthropist is like a medicinal tree (Kural – 217).” In the case of a medicinal tree in which every part of the tree, including its roots, bark, flowers, fruits, seeds, and leaves, is useful for medicinal purposes, people would harvest all parts of the tree, and the tree would no longer exist. Similarly, the truly magnanimous philanthropist would distribute all his wealth until there is nothing left to give. This type of philanthropy is like the “Spend Down Foundations” in the USA. In a Spend Down Foundation, all the assets are spent for the intended purpose, and once the assets are depleted, then there is nothing to give.

Although the models described above deal with the philanthropic patterns of the rich, Valluvar does not limit philanthropy to the rich. In fact, he is of the opinion that it is everyone’s duty to be aware of their social responsibility and should feel the need for sharing whatever they have with the deserving people who are in need. To be specific, he says,

If benevolence would result in one’s ruin, then it is worth securing that ruin by selling oneself, if necessary. (Kural – 220)

According to Valluvar, there is nothing better than philanthropy either in this world or in heaven (Kural – 213). One cannot be more emphatic than Valluvar in advocating charity and philanthropy.

Nonviolence and non-Killing as acts of compassion

Millions of people are non-vegetarians. They enjoy eating meat. They are oblivious to the harm and hurt the animals would have felt when they were butchered. But, there are those who realize that killing animals for the sake of eating their flesh is indeed nothing but cruelty to those animals. Based on this realization, they abstain from eating meat and become vegetarians or vegans. This is truly an act of compassion. There are many who are vegetarians by birth and have never eaten meat. There are others who do not like to eat meat because of hygienic and health reasons. Their adherence to a vegetarian diet is due to family traditions or other reasons and may not be really due to their compassion towards other living beings. However, if one follows a vegetarian or a vegan diet out of his concern for other living beings, it is definitely an act of compassion. Valluvar asks, “How can it be consistent with compassion to fatten oneself on the flesh of other creatures (kural – 251).” He adds, “Those who realize that the meat is obtained by creating an ulcerous wound on another creature should abstain from eating meat (kural – 257).” Valluvar contends that if one realizes that meat-eating is an act of cruelty and abstains from eating meat, then he is practicing compassion.

Just like avoiding eating meat based on the conviction that it is a form of cruelty to animals, abstaining from acts of violence towards other living beings is considered an act of compassion. Again, the underlying motivation for abstaining from violence should be the realization that violence is injurious and harmful, and others' suffering is like our own suffering. Valluvar is strictly opposed to mental, verbal, and physical violence against any living beings at any time. His opposition to violence can be seen in the following kurals:

One must abstain from doing deeds to others that one feels painful to himself.

(Kural – 316)

Why does a man inflict those things he found harmful to himself upon other living beings?

(Kural – 318)

Since speech and actions emanate from the mind, Valluvar considers that "It is the supreme virtue not to have a harmful thought about anybody in any degree at any moment (kural 317)." Therefore, from the point of view of Valluvar, conscious and deliberate action undertaken to avoid violence is an act of compassion.

Obviously, not inflicting harm to other living beings based on the knowledge of and empathy for their suffering is an act of compassion. But, there are occasions when other human beings, animals, and even plants may need our help. Helping them is also an act of compassion. Tamil literature alludes to an extraordinary act of compassion towards a plant by a king named Paari. One day, the king Paari was going in a forest in his horse-driven chariot. He noticed a jasmine creeper lying on the ground without a tree or any other support to climb upon. He felt that the creeper might be trampled upon by animals and die. He left his chariot as support for the jasmine creeper to climb upon and thrive and went back to his palace on his horse. Another king named Pehan saw a peacock shivering in the cold weather, and he instantaneously took his upper garment and covered the peacock to protect it from the severe weather. These examples illustrate that compassion originates from one's heart and it manifests itself in many ways. Sometimes, avoiding violence towards other living beings may be an act of compassion. Sometimes helping other living beings, including human beings, animals, and plants, may be an act of compassion.

Conclusion

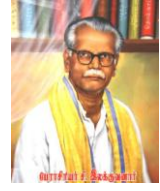
Valluvar considers that it is natural for one to have concern and attachment to one's immediate family. In his scheme of things, this concern and attachment, which he calls love for one's family, and relatives, should expand to other people and to all living beings. According to him, the expanded version of love is compassion. This compassion may manifest in the form of charity towards the poor, inspired by a sense of social responsibility. It may also manifest as philanthropy. Charity and philanthropy should be practiced

because they are the right thing to do and not because of any anticipated gain in this life or in the future lives. He says that even if heaven is denied to the giver, giving (charity) is still good (kural – 222). Like charity, philanthropy should also be carried out as a duty to society without expecting anything in return. In fact, he says, “Duty to society demands no return; what good could the world do to recompense the cloud that pours rain (kural – 211).” When Nobel laureate Albert Schweitzer says, “The purpose of human life is to serve and to show compassion and the will to help others,” we can hear him echoing Valluvar’s ideas on love and compassion.



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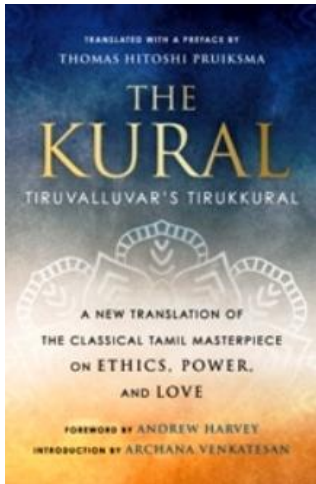
Thomas Hitoshi Pruiksma-A Translator of Thirukkural

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1 Thirukkural

Thomas Hitoshi Pruiksma-A Translator of Thirukkural



Thomas Hitoshi Pruiksma is an author, poet, translator, teacher, magician, musician, and lover of life. Since 2001 he has devoted his life to the highest possibilities of words and their power to join our hearts across time and place.

He was born in Seattle, Washington, and has lived and worked in Tamil Nadu, India, and Oaxaca, Mexico. His new translation of the classical Tamil masterpiece on ethics, power, and love, **THE KURAL: Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural**, appeared in January 2022 from Beacon Press. Other books include *The Safety of Edges* (poems), *Give, Eat, and Live: Poems of Avvaiyar* (translated from the Tamil) and *Body and Earth: Notes from a Conversation* (with the artist C. F. John). He is currently at work on a translation of and a book about Juan Rulfo's masterpiece, *Pedro Páramo*.

He also delights in speaking, teaching, and performing internationally, combining poetry, story, magic, and song in talks and presentations for the young and old alike. His solo shows include *A Thousand Thanks: The Gift*

of Sadako and Her Cranes, and By Heart: A Celebration of Words, Magic, and Memory. He serves as Language Consultant for the Cozy Grammar series of online video courses and has received grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, 4Culture, Artist Trust, the Community of Writers, the U.S. Fulbright Program, the American Literary Translators Association, Ohio State University, Oberlin Shansi, and Oberlin College.

Thomas makes his home on Vashon Island, Washington, with his husband, David Mielke. Together they're developing an original show, The Driftwood Bridge: An Offering of Story and Song.

thomaspruiksma.com

Exclusive Interview for our Thirukkural Express

[Thomas Hitoshi Pruiksma has given an interview answering our questions.]

Our very first question was:

What was your inspiring source to know about and learn Thirukkural?

I first began studying Tamil in 1998 as a recipient of an Oberlin Shansi Fellowship. This two-year fellowship had me teaching spoken English at American College in Madurai, studying spoken Tamil, and exploring some specific aspect of Tamil culture, which in my case was village life and rural community.

Very early on in my stay, a student invited me to his home for dinner. His parents fed me a sumptuous feast, and at the end of the lovely and leisurely evening, they surprised me with a gift: two books of Tamil poetry. One was a collection by a contemporary poet; the other, a special edition of Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural. My student's father pointed to the cover of the second, dust-jacketed book. "Everything you need to know is in here," he said. "There are chapters on every aspect of life. When you have learned Tamil fully, you must read this book well."

I had no idea at the time how my interest in the language was going to blossom. It would be years before I could delve fully into any kind of Tamil literature, let alone an ancient classic. But I did know something of the

importance of the Thirukkural even then; I'd seen quotes from it posted overhead in the city buses and had heard my Tamil teacher, Dr. K. V. Ramakoti, refer to several of the book's memorable verses.

(After this interesting narrative, we did put many questions and you will surely find them very informative and inspiring.)

1) From whom did you learn Thirukkural?

In 2003 and 2004, when I returned to India on a Fulbright grant, I spent the second half of my stay studying the Thirukkural with Dr. Ramakoti as a guest in his home, connecting the Kural to what I'd learned from him about the Sangam literature that is its backdrop and how different Sangam poets understand and express the relationship between people and place. Each day we read another chapter from the book, exploring not only the poetry itself but all the major commentaries that have grown up around it.

As part of the process, I memorized a selection of more than half of its verses, a far cry from the tradition of learning the entire volume by heart but enough at least to start getting some of its rhythms into my body. I also learned to write Tamil kurals myself, composing a handful of verses each morning before breakfast and showing them to Dr. Ramakoti for correction and emendation. They were not great poetry, but writing them deepened my understanding of Tamil prosody considerably.

2) How many commentaries of Kural you have learnt?

We studied the Kural using the wonderful Uraik Kotthu published by Sri Kasi Mutt in Thiruppanandal. I thus immersed myself in the commentaries of Manakkutavar, Pariperumāl, Paritiyār, Parimēlalakar, and Kālinkar.

3) Of them which one you followed for your translation?

I have sought to follow, first and foremost, my own deepest understanding of each verse, informed both by all of the commentaries I read and by Dr. Ramakoti's own insight and experience. In a sense, he too offered a profound commentary to the Kural.

In ordering and arranging the verses, I have followed Parimēlalakar, and in the commentary of notes that I provide with my translation, I have included insights from Manakkutavar, Parimēlalakar, and Paritiyār, as well as some of my own observations as a poet.

4) Do you agree Parimelazhagar's view that Kural follows Manu Dharma?

One of the qualities that I most honor and revere in the Kural is its profound openness to different philosophical and religious traditions. It is a testament to its poetry and to its humanity that people of sometimes very different

spiritual orientations have all found their principles reflected in the Kural's wisdom.

Equally interesting to me is how the Kural integrates longstanding ideals and ideas that we find in the Sangam period with the riches of Tamil love poetry, creating a nourishing synthesis and vision of wholeness that still speaks to people of all walks of life today.

5) What were the problems you faced in Translation work?

The greatest challenge to me was to find a way to translate each poem of the Kural as a poem and not merely as a statement in prose. This was also the very reason for undertaking the project. Despite the singular importance of the Kural, and despite the number of times the work has been translated into English, the Kural remains virtually unknown in the English-speaking world. I believe this is because the poetic genius has not yet been conveyed in a way that English-speaking readers can hear and respond to.

6) Which were the difficult moments while on translation and how did you overcome?

The paradox of translating a great poet like Thiruvalluvar is that the better a verse is, the harder it is to translate, simply because it draws so deeply on the Tamil language itself, with its own unique sonic and linguistic qualities.

The way that I have sought to overcome this difficulty—to the extent that it

can be overcome—is to be as skillful a poet in English as possible. I have drawn as deeply as I can from the poetic depths of English to find ways to suggest something of Thiruvalluvar’s genius in English.

7) What is the unique characteristic feature of Thirukkural?

In addition to the openness I mentioned previously, another of the characteristics I admire about the Thirukkural is the deep practicality of its wisdom. These are verses that help us to embody compassion, goodness, and good sense in the nitty-gritty of everyday life. This not only distinguishes the work but makes it as relevant today as when it was first composed.

8) Do you agree Thirukkural is an universal scripture? Why?

I believe the Thirukkural is a work of wisdom that is able to speak to people of many times and places because it speaks so fully and so generously to and from its own cultural context. It offers a vision that encompasses the cosmos and thus invites us all into a dialogue far beyond conventional borders and boundaries.

Let me add that the place where I have seen some of the ideals of the Kural most deeply embodied in actual life is the village outside Madurai where I was blessed to live when I was first learning Tamil and with which I

continue to have a rich and ongoing relationship. As Kural 1032 reminds us:

Farmers sustain everyone not farming—they

Are the pin holding the world together

9) Do you find any resemblance in your Japanese literature with Thirukkural? Please elaborate.

Although I studied some Japanese in school, I didn't have the opportunity to learn it in great depth. My knowledge of Japanese literature has thus come primarily through translation. However, I do think there is an interesting parallel between the development of the 3-line haiku form from the 5-line waka form in Japanese poetry and the 2-line Kural venpa that the Kural employs and the 4-line venpa, for instance, from a poet such as Avvaiyar.

10) Do you agree that propagation of Thirukkural among the people will bring harmony, peace and amity? Are you ready for such propagation?

I certainly believe that the Kural offers us inspiration and practical guidance for the work of compassion, harmony, and peace in the world. As Kural 991 says:

From openness to all people the practice

Of kindness comes easily

If we learn or remember that the root of the English word “kindness” is “kind,” in its own root sense of “nature” or “quality,” we may also see that the Kural, with its understanding of rain and the ecological interrelatedness of human beings with a more-than-human world, also offers inspiration for the work of honoring the earth beneath our feet and the heavens that feed us from above.

Valluvar on Three Special Vices

---Thirukkural Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Introduction

In the first part of his book, Valluvar delineates the negative qualities such as coveting another man's wife, envy, coveting others' wealth, backbiting, slander, eating non-vegetarian food, improper conduct, stealing, anger, harming others, killing, and desire as qualities that one should avoid. But there are three special vices that he does not include in the first part of his book. Those three vices are relationships with prostitutes, consuming intoxicating beverages, and gambling. Valluvar treats these three vices differently from those listed in the first part of the Kural. If one engages in the vices mentioned in the first part of the kural, one is causing harm to another living being. Whereas those involved in the three special vices mentioned above cause harm to themselves and their families and incur their own financial loss. Perhaps, this is why they are included in the second part of the Kural dealing with wealth. In fact, Valluvar says that the prostitutes, drinking, and gambling are friends of those who are forsaken by

fortune (kural -920). Thus, he emphasizes the connection between these three vices and one's wealth.

Relationships with Prostitutes

Valluvar's disgust for prostitutes: Valluvar asserts that prostitutes do not genuinely love their customers. They are only interested in their customers' wealth. He says that listening to the sweet words of a beautiful prostitute will bring forth disgrace to her customers (kural – 911). He advises that one should analyze the character of wanton women who utter sweet words and care only for their own material gains and stay away from them (kural – 912). He says that the false embrace of a prostitute is as disgusting as embracing a strange corpse in a dark room (kural – 913). These statements by Valluvar reveal his disgust for prostitutes and his reasons why one should not have any relationship with them.

About those who abstain from prostitutes: Valluvar is of the opinion that men who study and practice righteousness will never indulge in the mean pleasures obtainable from a prostitute (kural – 914). He also says that one with knowledge and wisdom will not indulge in the mean pleasures available from prostitutes (kural - 915). Further, he adds that those who want to protect their honor and reputation will not embrace the shoulders of

harlots who sell their beauty and charms for their own monetary gain (kural – 916). The central theme in the three kurals mentioned above is that the pleasure that one can obtain from a prostitute is despicable and intelligent men who value virtue and honor will not seek those pleasures.

About those who have a relationship with prostitutes: In three kurals, Valluvar describes the characteristics of those who have a relationship with prostitutes. First, he says that only weak-minded people will seek the pleasures from prostitutes who embrace them while not really loving them (kural – 917). Next, he remarks that the wise people say that for those who lack discerning intelligence, the embrace of a prostitute will result in painful consequences (kural – 918). Finally, he mentions that the delicate shoulders of prostitutes wearing excellent jewels are a deep hell for those with degraded minds (kural-919).

Valluvar's stance on prostitution: Prostitution as a profession has been around for a long time. The earliest mention of prostitution is found in the Sumerian records dating back to 2,400 B.C. No wonder prostitution is called the world's oldest profession! The primary reason women resort to prostitution is their lack of economic independence. In the old days, man has been the family's sole breadwinner. Also, in the old days, due to ongoing wars, many men were killed. Therefore, the male population was less in number than that of the female population. So, when a woman could

not get married or if her husband and parents were not there to support her, she would not have had any means to make a living. Probably, women in such situations were forced into prostitution. The other reason is the demand for the services offered by prostitutes. Demand creates the supply. If men did not seek the services of prostitutes, the number of prostitutes would have been much less. Although prostitution is despicable, it is not entirely the fault of a woman if she were to become a prostitute. The blame for prostitution should be shared by society and by society's male members.

In the Chapter on “Abstinence from meat (Chapter -26)”, Valluvar makes an interesting observation. The original version of Buddhism, known as the Mahayana, advocated abstinence from meat-eating because it involves killing a living being. The later versions of Buddhism revised the stance on meat-eating and suggested that meat-eating was acceptable if a person did not kill an animal and purchased the meat from someone who had already killed it. Valluvar criticizes this argument by saying that if no one wanted to eat meat, nobody would be selling meat (kural – 256). Similar logic is equally applicable here too. If men did not want the services of prostitutes, there would be no prostitutes. It is surprising that Valluvar did not apply the same logic and condemn the men for their interest in prostitutes.

Valluvar's criticism of prostitution could have been much stronger and more pointed towards the male members of society. However, it should be pointed out that in the Tamil society of Valluvar's days, prostitution and male promiscuity were not really condemned. It was accepted by society as a fact of life. Valluvar was the first Tamil philosopher/scholar to have spoken openly against prostitution and male promiscuity. That credit certainly belongs to Valluvar.

Consumption of alcoholic beverages

Drinking alcoholic beverages has been in practice for a very long time. In fact, it has been discovered that as early as the Neolithic period (10,000 B.C), people have used fermented beverages. According to a study published in the Proceedings of the U.S National Academy of Sciences, chemical analysis of the residues from some jugs confirmed that a fermented drink made of grapes, hawthorn berries, honey, and rice was being produced during the time period 7,000 BC–6,650 BC. There is ample evidence in Tamil literature to indicate that locally brewed and imported alcoholic beverages were consumed in Tamil Nadu, the state in India where Valluvar was born and raised. As in the case of prostitution, Valluvar was the first Tamil philosopher/scholar who disapproved of drinking alcoholic beverages.

Valluvar's View on Drinking: Valluvar's view on drinking can be summarized as follows:

Those who are addicted to drinking will never be feared by their enemies and they will lose their fame (kural – 921). One should not drink. If one does not care to be respected by the learned people, one can go ahead and drink. In other words, those who drink will not be respected by the learned people (kural – 922). The drunkard's intoxication pains even his own mother. So, "what will be the effect of such intoxication on learned people? (kural -923)". Those who make the big mistake of drinking will lack the good habit of modesty in their behavior (kural- 924). It is utter ignorance to pay money for liquor and get the insensibility in return (kural – 925). The ones who are asleep are like the dead. So also, those who drink regularly are not any different from those who consume poison (kural – 926). Those who drink secretly in privacy will be the laughingstock of their fellow – citizens because their inebriation will be detected by others (kural – 927). Let not the drunkard say, "I have never tasted liquor." When he is intoxicated, everyone will come to know that he is drunk (kural – 928). To reason with a drunkard is like going with a torch underwater searching for a man drowned in deep waters (kural – 929). When a man is sober and witnesses the condition of a drunken person, why does he not realize the ill effects of drinking (kural – 930)?

Comments on Valluvar's view on Drinking: From the preceding paragraph, it is clear that Valluvar does not approve of drinking. His criticism of drinking is somewhat modest and not a very severe condemnation. In all the ten kurals cited above, we see him describing the ill effects of drinking. But he does not strongly condemn drinking. Perhaps, he was convinced that it was of no avail to reason with those who drink, and he was trying to warn only those who do not drink about the dangers of drinking so that they may not get into the habit of drinking. If that was his intention, his approach seems appropriate. All attempts to enforce prohibition generally end up in failure. Even in countries where drinking is strictly against the law, people who want to drink, somehow manage to get alcoholic beverages. People often ignore even religious objections to drinking. The best way to avoid drinking is to practice self-control and not get into the addictive habit of drinking.

Gambling

Gambling is the wagering of money or something of value on an event with an uncertain outcome with the primary intent of winning money or material goods. Like drinking, gambling has been in practice for centuries. The Hindu epic Mahabharata is the story describing how the great and the most virtuous Dharmaputra was enticed into high-stake gambling and how he lost his country and even his wife. Like drinking, gambling is also addictive.

During Valluvar's days, prostitution and drinking were not uncommon. But there is no evidence to conclude that gambling was a widespread problem during Valluvar's days.

Valluvar's view of Gambling: Valluvar's ideas regarding gambling are as follows: Even if you are winning, do not gamble. Your gain is like the baited hook of iron that the fish has swallowed (kural – 931). Is there any way for a gambler to prosper when he gains one and loses one hundred (kural – 932)? If one goes on calling his bets, his riches and resources will roll away from him (kural -933). There is nothing that brings about poverty like gambling, which causes misery and ruins one's reputation (kural - 934). Despite their skills in gambling acquired in the casinos, habitual gamblers eventually end up in poverty (kural – 935). Habitual gamblers are under the spell of the goddess of poverty. They will never have enough to eat, and they will wallow in misery (kural-936). If one wastes one's time daily in gambling casinos, one's inherited wealth and virtues will be ruined (kural – 937). Gambling destroys one's wealth, destroys innate benevolence, and leads to falsehood and misery (kural – 938). The gambler will lose his dress, wealth, food, fame, and learning (kural – 939). Love for gambling grows with each loss, like the love for life grows with every torment (kural – 940).

Comments on Valluvar's view on gambling: Valluvar clearly states that gambling is addictive and that it will lead to untold misery. Therefore, even if one is winning, one should not continue to gamble. From the above kurals, we can observe his disgust for gambling and his sympathy for those who are addicted to gambling. It was observed that Valluvar was not very strong in his criticism of drinking. But his criticism of gambling is direct and quite strong. He very vividly portrays the negative consequences of gambling.

Conclusion

In a society where male promiscuity was not uncommon and drinking was not unusual, Valluvar's condemnation of these evils is truly commendable. In addition to Valluvar, religions have also condemned prostitution, drinking, and gambling in varying degrees. Despite all this, society has not changed. These vices continued to be practiced by countless number people around the world. Prostitution is illegal in many countries of the world. However, sex trafficking and prostitution have not decreased. Human rights activists like Amnesty International advocate decriminalization of prostitution. In the past, drinking was the primary source of intoxication. Now, starting from marijuana, there are several potent intoxicants and mind-altering drugs some of which are even prescribed by medical practitioners. Like prostitution and drinking, gambling

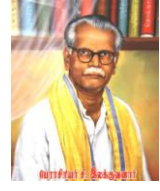
also exists throughout the world in various forms. Despite the variety of regulations and laws controlling gambling activities, gambling exists in many forms, including online gambling.

The increasing trend to decriminalize or legalize these evil practices is a blatant admission of the inability of society to stop them. Perhaps, it may never be possible to completely stop these practices. However, decriminalization and liberalization may not be the answer. If prostitution, drinking, and gambling are decriminalized because of our inability to control them, what is next? Since society is unable to control thefts, rapes, murders, etc. are we ready to decriminalize them? There should be strict laws and they should be enforced strictly. Further, it is the responsibility of individuals to exercise self-control and guard against evil practices. It is the duty of the religious and political leaders and educational institutions to encourage self-control. Valluvar's approach is always towards advising the individual to exercise self-control and to follow the path of virtue. Perhaps, that is the reason why he did not start a religion or a movement towards the total transformation of society. His approach is to encourage the individual to change.



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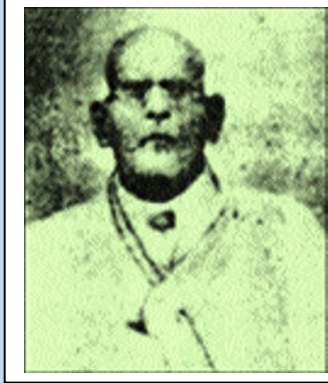
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E-Zine fortnightly

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The Mastermind of the supreme genius-Thiruvalluvar

--M.S.Purnalingam Pillai



Purnalingam Pillai was born on 25 May 1866 to Sivasubramaniam Pillai at Munnirpallam in Tinnevely district. After his initial education, Pillai joined as a lecturer of English at the Madras Christian College. During this period, Pillai got interested in studying Tamil history and civilization. He edited a Tamil journal called Gnanabodhini along with Parithimar Kalaignar. In 1904, Pillai published the first comprehensive study of Tamil literature as a historical narrative, titled A Primer of Tamil Literature. The narration was strongly imbued with a Dravidian supremacist point of view. In the early 1920s, when excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro were in their nascent stages, Pillai, along with another Dravidologist, T. R. Seshu Iyengar, predicted that future discoveries would establish beyond doubt that the Indus Valley Civilization was of Dravidian origin and also along with it the antiquity of Tamil civilization and language. He translated the entire Tirukkural into English in prose and published it in 1942.

The name " Thiruvalluvar " means the great man of the Valluva community" and the title " Kural" signifies the metre of the poem. Both the author and his work have borne no proper or distinctive names. Nor is anything reliable known either of his parentage, or of his career. But the work exists or is extant as a whole, unadulterated by schismatics and unimpaired or untampered with by copyists in the procession of ages. That the poet

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was a keen observer of nature, animate and inanimate, a diligent student of ancient classics on *ahapporul* and *purapporul*, on rhetoric and dialectic, on morality and statecraft, on agriculture and medicine, on folk-lore, tree-and-plant-lore, and psychology and erotic diplomacy, and was a practical thinker and reformer, is beyond all cavil or question. Nobody -doubts his poetic artistry (vide Tiru-Valluva-mālai, stanza 45, elutthu-asai etc.) and his noble sentiments in his masterpiece of Tamil literature composed of apophthegms in brief couplets. How a close study of this anthology would benefit a modern reader deserves consideration. Does it throw any light on the pressing problems of the day? Let the reader go over the couplets 21, 322, 373, 401, 410, 440, 533, 543, 560, 581, 636, 683, 725, 727, 743, 783, 941, to know the extent of his erudition,

" The settled rule of every code requires,

Their greatness who, renouncing all, true to their rule have stood." 21

" Let those that need, partake your meal; guard everything that lives ;

This is the chief and sum of lore that hoarded wisdom gives." 322.

To self-oblivious men no praise ; this rule, as highest good, Decisive wisdom sums of every school." 533.

"These two-the code renowned, and spies,

In these let king confide as eyes." 581

" When native subtilty combines sound scholastic lore

'T is subtilty surpassing all which nothing stands before." 636

"By rule, to dialectic art your mind apply,

That in the council fearless you make an apt reply." 725."

"To those who lack the hero's eye what can the sword avail?

Or Science what, to those before the council keen who quail. 726,

As shining sword before the foe which sexless being bears, Is science learned by him
the council's face who fears." 727

'Height, breadth, strength, difficult access ;

Science declares a fort must these possess." 743.

"The learned books court three, with wind as first ; of these

As any one prevails or fails, 't will cause disease." 941.

Vide 1078 for the sugar-cane ; 104, 1444, 1282 for the millet ; 433, 1282 for the palmyra
; 216 for the fruit-bearing tree; 1008 for the poison tree; 870 for the thorn tree ; 217 for
the medicine tree; 274 for the rush or thicket; 1304 for the valli or the creeper ; 965 for
the abrus seed (Kuntri); 621 for the pakadu or cattle ; 486 for the ram; 273, 599 for the
tiger ; 969 for the yak or wild ox or fawn; 814 for the horse; 195 for the crocodile ; 678,
758, 772 for the elephant; 481, 527, for the crow and the owl; 1120 for the annam or
swan, and the sensitive plant (nerunji); 490 for the kokku or heron; 1081 for the peacock
and its feathers (peeli); 500 for the jackal, and 763 for the rat and the snake.

The modern reader will find in this classical poem much food for thought, reflection and
action. The *theosophist* will discover the poet's theosophy in Study I. In it God is
personal and impersonal and Truth. The moralist will be satisfied with his precepts and
maxims on hate and the evil-doer, Shakespeare has:

" Love thyself last; cherish those hearts that hate thee, Corruption wins not more than
honesty. Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace To silence envious tongues; be just
and fear not; Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy Country's, Thy God's and Truth's."

Vide Study VI on "" Virtues and Vices."

To punish wrong, with kindly benefits the doers ply,

Thus shame their souls; but pass the ill unheeded by." 314.

With overweening pride when men with injuries assail,

By thine own righteous dealing shalt thou mightily prevail." 158.

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" What fruit doth your perfection yield you say !

Unless to men who work you ill you good repay." 987,

The social reformer will murmur that the poet has not done justice to womankind as he praises a wife for her implicit obedience to her lord as a God and gives her no equality and liberty that the new or the smart woman fights for in these days. But he will be immensely pleased with the poet's strictures on the caste system, on toddy.drinking, gambling, and concupiscence or debauchery, on killing and flesh-eating, and with his appreciation of hospitality or feeding strangers. Vide the chapters bearing these titles. It was too early for a poet who had lived eighteen hundred years ago to dream of baby marriages and baby widows or to legislate for them, as the post-puberty (arivai) marriage was the only system in vogue then and that, as a result of courtship and self-choice. The poet does not recognise the necessity for any religious ceremony or sanction to bind the parties in love, as the country was not priest-ridden at that time. The labourite will be delighted with the dignity of labour maintained by the author and with the sweetness of selfearned pottage. Vide Chapters 60-62.

"Nothing is sweeter than to taste the toil-won cheer,

Though mess of pottage as tasteless as the water clear." 1065.

Even thin gruel is ambrosia to him

Who has earned it by labour." (ibid).

He will find satisfaction in the condemnation of poverty due to sloth and mendicancy adopted for ease and freedom.

The religious reformer will derive pleasure from the poet's tirade against mere formalism or ritualism and self-mortifying and sham asceticism and from the espousing of tapas or: penitential meditation,

The political reformer will learn much from the chapters on state-craft, on embassy and spying, and on the management of foes and famines,

"Not lance gives kings the victory,

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But sceptre swayed with equity."546.

The educational reformer will see that technical education imparted, if it is to do good, must be based on one's special aptitude and should not be determined by heredity or custom.

" As each man's special aptitude is known

Bid each man make that special work his own," 518,

Besides the knowledge, and wisdom derived by the poet. from his nature studies and from his perusal or mastery of books which he has used in an ample measure in the composition of this unique work, there are direct references to his lilo-experiences which reflect the nobility and the mental calibre of our vates sacer. Three of the couplets bearing on such experiences are quoted below :

"Of all that men acquire we know not any greater gain, Than that which by the birth of learned children men obtain." 61,

"Of all good things we've scanned with studious care

There's naught that can with truthfulness compare." 300.

"The base resemble men in outward form, I ween;

But counterpart exact them I've never soon," 1071,

The first shows his love of children, the second exhibits his passion for veracity, and the third manifests his contempt for baseness.

In fine, the "perfect man" of Thiruvalluvar, though he resembles other mortals in the fact of his being mother-born and in the possession of parts, arms and limbs, making up the human frame, differs from them in his meritorious work and in his moral excellence.

"All beings that live are one in circumstance of birth ;

Diversities of works give each his special work." 972.

"Men are not one, because their members seem alike to outward view;

Similitude of kindred quality makes likeness true."993

Here is a clear statement contradicting the claim of superior birth set up by priesthood which has hypnotised the unthinking masses to be willing slaves and put down their desire for uplift as blasphemy and sacrilege. Able reformers like Kapilar and Ramanujir have failed to shatter the citadel of birth supremacy, but the only effective means for its demolition is the spread or dissemination of the right kind of education among the illiterate which, by inculcating liberty, equality, and fraternity, opens their mental eye to the dense darkness of ignorance into which they have been thrust from time immemorial. Here is also a caution against the foolish boast of the low and the mean and of the oppressed, suppressed and depressed classes that they resemble the other mortals in their physique and in their blood and that they have, therefore, every right to claim equality with savants, saints and sages. What divide man from man learning, his wealth, and his moral worth, but these are not inseparable barriers. Despite such an able advocacy of man as man, the poet alludes to pirap-pu olukkam, conduct arising from or due to his birth as seer's or scholar's son in the subjoined distich.

Though he forget, the scholar may regain his learned lore ; Failing in decorum due, regard is gone for ever more. 134,

The orthodox man may, however, gloat over this apparent slip or rather innuendo and still claim the poet as perfectly his own in respect of his belief in the soul's immortality and transmigration, in the existence of worlds above and below, in the superior virtues of asceticism, and in the birth-termination by absolute renunciation.

This triple treatise of Morality, Material Prosperity and Affection in 133 chapters, each of ten couplets, won immediate applause in the author's lifetime. Kalladar has praised it as a moral code for the whole of humanity, irrespective of colour, creed and community, and has set forth the way of good from the world's point of view, unbiassed by any narrow sectarian prejudices. Hence its popularity all the world over-in England, Italy, France, Germany, not to speak of India. " Though dead, he yet speaketh". "To think is to live ; and he, by whom the reality and responsibility of life on earth

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was thought out in all its manifold bearings and aspects, still lives in the loving memory of millions. Nineteen centuries have not diminished the weight bis authority or the vitality of his utterances. He lives, and his fame will increase with the flight of time ; and as long as men continue to revere the true and the good, will the words of the poet continue to inspire them; and gain bim a seat with the great teachers of the world."

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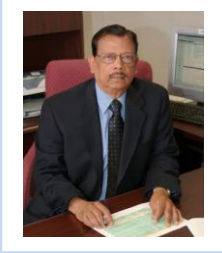
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Valluvar on Communication

Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran



Introduction

The ability to communicate is not unique to human beings. Scientists and others have observed that animals communicate with other animals of their own species and sometimes with animals belonging to other species. The mode of communication by animals is distinctly different from human beings' verbal and non-verbal communication patterns. Animals use visual, auditory, tactile, chemical, and even electrical means to communicate. However, their communication is limited to gathering and sharing food, protecting themselves and their young ones from the predators, informing other members of their group of imminent danger, courting their mates, etc. These communications are aimed at meeting certain basic necessities for their survival.

On the other hand, human beings can communicate by a variety of methods, and their communications are not limited to basic survival or satisfying certain biological instincts. Human beings are endowed with well-developed brains and intellectual capabilities. They can discuss abstract ideas and express complex concepts with the use of languages, tools, and other techniques.

Power of Speech

Human beings can express love, affection, anger, and other emotions through their speech and body language. In addition to interpersonal communication, human beings can also communicate with a multitude of people simultaneously. With the advent of modern technologies, the power of communication can even transcend the limitations of space and time. The power of speech can be used for positive as well as negative purposes. Almost two thousand years ago, Valluvar recognized the power of speech, and he says that it is the chief among all the gifts a man can possess.

The gift of speech is indeed a special gift, and it stands apart from other gifts.

(Thirukkural– 641)

Speech has the potential to cause good and bad consequences. While the demagoguery of Adolf Hitler laid the foundation for hatred and war, the speeches of Sir Winston Churchill encouraged Great Britain to fight against Adolf Hitler. United States President John F. Kennedy's speech motivated the USA to take the lead in space exploration. Speeches of Rev. Martin Luther King inspired the USA to enact the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in the USA. There are other examples of speeches by famous leaders that have altered the course of human history. The impact of speech is equally powerful in interpersonal communications also. A kind and gentle word from a friend is a great consolation in times of distress. Whereas an unkind, harsh and offending word stays like a wound that never heals. The following Thirukkural by Valluvar warns us to guard against blemishes in our speech.

Since good and evil consequences may arise from speech, it is wise to guard against blemishes in speech.

(Thirukkural – 642)

Valluvar on Public Speaking

Public speaking is the act of performing a speech by an individual to a live audience. The objective of public speaking is to inform, persuade, or entertain the audience. The art of public speaking was highly developed in ancient Greece and Rome. There were experts who taught public speaking techniques to others for a fee. In ancient Greece, citizens spoke on their own behalf rather than having professionals like modern lawyers to speak on their behalf. Any citizen who wished to succeed in court, politics, or social life had to learn the techniques of public speaking. Techniques for public speaking were first taught by a group of teachers called Sophists, who were notable for teaching paying students how to speak effectively using the methods they had developed. Apart from the sophists, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle also developed their own theories of public speaking and taught those principles to students who wanted to learn the skills necessary for public speaking. Plato and Aristotle taught these principles in schools they founded, The Academy and The Lyceum, respectively.

Like the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, Valluvar also offers his own advice for effective public speaking. In the Thirukkural, Valluvar's ideas on public speaking can be found in the section dealing with the characteristics, duties, and responsibilities of a minister. In those days, it was the minister's duty to carry out the orders of the king. This aspect of the minister's job required considerable skills in the art of diplomacy. He had to persuade others to accept the king's mandate and even negotiate terms with the king's enemies. So, the minister had to be adept in the art of public speaking. But, nowadays, public speaking is a necessary skill for most professionals and politicians. Valluvar's advice on public speaking was appropriate not only for the ministers of his days, but it is still useful to anyone who needs to perform the act of public speaking. Valluvar was a genius in offering advice on many matters, and his advice is

eternally valid and universally applicable. His advice on public speaking is no exception. In the following paragraphs, Valluvar's ideas on public speaking are presented.

Mastery of the Subject:

Dale Carnegie (1888 –1955) was an American writer, lecturer, and developer of famous courses in self-improvement, salesmanship, corporate training, public speaking, and interpersonal skills. In his book, *The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking*, he lists several guidelines for effective public speaking. His first advice is: Speak about something you have earned the right to talk about through experience and study. This is precisely what Valluvar said almost 2000 years ago. Valluvar strongly favors education and mastery of the subject matter for a speaker before he would venture to address an assembly of learned men. He says that if a man is not adequately learned, he should keep his silence in the assembly of wise men. He believes that even if a man is wise, he will not be recognized if he does not have proper education. According to him, the self-esteem of an uneducated man will fade away when he begins to address an assembly of educated men.

To speak in an assembly of the learned without the fullness of knowledge is like playing chess on a board without the squares being marked. (Thirukkural – 401)

The desire of the uneducated to speak in an assembly is like a woman without breasts desiring to enjoy her womanhood. (Thirukkural – 402)

The uneducated men are excellent if they know how to keep their silence before the learned. (Thirukkural – 403)

Although the wisdom of an uneducated man happens to be very good, the learned will not accept it. (Thirukkural – 404)

The self-esteem of an uneducated man will fade away when he begins to interact with the learned. (Thirukkural – 405)

From the above Thirukkural, it is clear that Valluvar expects education and knowledge of the subject matter as sine qua non for anyone wanting to speak in front of an audience.

Overcome the fear of public speaking: According to Dale Carnegie, eighty to ninety percent of college students have a fear of public speaking. He says that the percentage of adults who are afraid of public speaking is probably higher than that of college students who fear public speaking. Valluvar also agrees that it is a rare individual who is not afraid of public speaking.

Many indeed may face death on the battlefield; but only a few can face an audience without fear. (Thirukkural – 723)

So, what exactly is the solution to overcome this fear of public speaking? First, mastery of the subject is extremely helpful in developing confidence which is necessary to overcome the fear. Another recommendation for overcoming the fear is practice. Dale Carnegie and many other modern authors agree that persistent practice will be very helpful in overcoming the stage fear. Valluvar does not precisely say that practice is essential to overcome fear. But his general advice in another context is applicable here as well. Valluvar believes that persistent perseverance, tireless effort, and not succumbing to setbacks are essential to succeed in any endeavor.

One should not feel disheartened when a job seems impossible; persistent efforts will result in success. (Thirukkural – 611)

In this context, it is worth noting the story of Demosthenes, one of the greatest orators of ancient Greece. Demosthenes (384 BC - 322 BC) was a contemporary of Plato and Aristotle. He was the son of a wealthy sword maker. His father died, leaving him a huge inheritance. But his unscrupulous guardians usurped most of his inheritance. Demosthenes decided to sue his guardians. In those days, there were no lawyers. He had to plead his own case in court. But,

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according to the Greek historian and biographer Plutarch, Demosthenes was inarticulate in his expression, and he had persistent stammering in his pronunciation. He overcame his handicaps by speaking with pebbles in his mouth and reciting verses when running. He also practiced speaking before a large mirror. Eventually, he became one of the greatest orators of all time and a famous speechwriter in Greece. Demosthenes' story is an example to show that persistent effort will lead to success. It does not really matter whether we call it training or simply dogged perseverance, as Valluvar refers to it.

Understanding the audience:

The speaker in an assembly is like a salesman trying to promote a product to his customers. In order for the salesman to be effective, he should be aware of the product's features, the mood of his audience, the level of interest of the audience in the product, and the audience's ability to understand the product's features. So, the salesman will judge the audience and adjust his presentation to suit the audience's interest and ability to understand the product's features. A public speaker is in a similar situation. He should assess the caliber, requirements, and mood of his audience and make his presentation so that it appeals to his audience.

First and foremost, he should understand the audience. His speech should have the right content. Also, in his speech, he should use the right words, the right delivery style, and the proper pronunciation in the right tone with appropriate modulation in his voice. In the following Thirukkural, Valluvar conveys the importance of understanding the audience and his suggestions for proper diction for the delivery of the presentation.

Men of eloquent speech, and precision in words, will choose their words and their presentation style based on the audience and their disposition. (Thirukkural – 711)

Competent and eloquent speakers will suit their contents and the diction of their presentation in accordance with the mood of the audience. (Thirukkural – 712)

Valluvar encourages the speaker to demonstrate his superior knowledge in the assembly of learned men and suggests that the speaker should assume a low profile like an ignorant man in

the company of those who are not very knowledgeable. He suggests that the speaker should exhibit modesty in his behavior and should not attempt to outshine when he is in the company of elders who possess superior knowledge. He assures that the knowledge and wisdom of the speaker will be appreciated by men of learning and critical judgment. He says that when a learned man addresses an assembly of other learned men, they will eagerly absorb his speech like growing plants absorbing the water. He also warns that a speaker capable of delivering impressive lectures to a learned audience should never consider giving such presentations to an audience who is incapable of understanding him. In fact, he says that indulging in highly intellectual discussions with those who do not have the capacity to understand or appreciate what is said is like pouring life-saving nectar into a gutter. These valuable and practical guidelines from Valluvar to an aspiring speaker can be seen in the following Thirukkural:

Speak intelligently in the assembly of the wise; assume the color of white lime mortar before the ignorant. (Thirukkural – 714)

In the assembly of elderly wise people, it would be an outstanding virtue to be modest, exercise restraint, and not seek to outshine them. (Thirukkural – 715)

A learned person's erudition will shine in the assembly of learned men with critical judgement. (Thirukkural – 717)

Speaking to those who have the ability to understand is like watering a bed of growing plants. (Thirukkural – 718)

Those who are capable of speaking impressively to the learned audience should not make the mistake of addressing the audience who are incapable of understanding him.

(Thirukkural – 719)

Indulging in learned discourses before an audience who are not your intellectual equals

is like pouring life-saving nectar into the gutter.

(Thirukkural – 720)

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In Thirukkural 714, the expression "assume the color of white lime mortar" is an idiomatic expression for becoming one with the surroundings. In this case, if the speaker is among those who are not very learned, he should talk at their level so that they can understand.

Choice of words and delivery of the speech:

Valluvar emphasizes that the speaker should carefully prepare his speech so that no one can refute his statements. This implies that the speaker should thoroughly prepare his speech so that it is factually correct and logically consistent and that others cannot dispute his statements. This is very important when the speaker is in a debate or in a courtroom situation where there is a possibility of someone challenging his remarks. The relevant Thirukkural is as follows:

Deliver your speech after assuring yourself that no counter argument can defeat your statements. (Thirukkural – 645)

Valluvar states that one should speak in such a manner that those present should be completely attracted and spell-bound, and those who were absent should feel that they should have listened to the speech.

A speech should captivate the audience and even those who were absent should long to hear it. (Thirukkural – 643)

This may appear to be a tall order for a speaker. However, there have been several speakers whose speeches have even outlived them. The Gettysburg address of President Abraham Lincoln and the "I have a dream speech" of Rev. Martin Luther King are two well-known examples of such speeches. One example of such a captivating speaker is Mr. C. N. Annadurai (1909 – 1969). Mr. Annadurai, affectionately referred to as Anna by his followers, was a politician during the second half of the twentieth century in Tamil Nadu, where Valluvar

lived 2000 years ago. Anna was a successful politician. He rose from virtual obscurity to become the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. His meteoric rise and his party's victory in the elections were primarily due to the phenomenal public speaking prowess of Anna and his close associates. The author is personally familiar

During the late 1950s, I was a student at Loyola College in Chennai (the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu), pursuing my undergraduate studies. Loyola college is one of the premier educational institutions in India, run by Jesuit priests. Loyola College was not only known for its academic excellence, but it was also known for strict enforcement of discipline among the students. When I was at Loyola College, I stayed in the dormitory. There was a strict rule that the students in the dormitory were supposed to be in their rooms from 8 PM each night till 6 AM the following day. Anyone who violated the rule was subject to heavy penalties, including eviction from the dormitory.

Anna used to speak often in the Marina beach in Chennai. The beach could accommodate thousands of people. Anna was an outstanding speaker. He had a great sense of humor. He was always very convincing in his speech. Even his political adversaries would love to listen to his speeches. He had the remarkable ability to make thousands of his listeners laugh, think, and even be motivated to act on his behalf. His diction was excellent. Alliteration was his specialty. Usually, his speeches were in the early part of the night. On several occasions, some of my friends and I violated the dormitory rules and went to the Marina beach to listen to Anna's speech and sneaked back into our rooms without the knowledge of the dormitory warden. The following day, my friends who did not attend Anna's meeting would gather around me and ask me to imitate his speech. Of course, Anna was inimitable. I used to try my best.

If I had been caught for my transgression, I would have been in severe trouble with my college and my father. But my interest in Anna's speech got the better of me. The point of this

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anecdote is to illustrate that there are and there have been speakers who met Valluvar's dictum in Thirukkural 643.

Brevity in speech:

Valluvar remarks that only those who do not know how to be brief tend to make long speeches. It is said that Sir Winston Churchill mentioned that it took him more time to prepare a short speech than the time it took to prepare a long speech. For a speech to be effective and sustain the audience's interest, it should be brief and to the point. Some of the great speeches are indeed very short. For example, President Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address was less than three minutes. Sir Winston Churchill's "Never give in" speech was less than five minutes. President Delano Roosevelt's "Infamy Speech" was less than three minutes. Rev. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech was about fifteen minutes. These speeches are available on the Internet, and the interested reader can listen and admire the brevity and profundity of these speeches. These speeches were made at critical junctures of human history. So, Valluvar's emphasis on brevity in public speaking is appropriate. The relevant Thirukkural is as follows:

Those who do not know how to convey their ideas in a few faultless words will desire to utter many words. (Thirukkural – 649)

Interpersonal Communication

The other aspect of human communication involves interpersonal communication. Only a few people have the need and opportunity to engage in public speaking. Whereas everyone is involved in interpersonal communication on a daily basis. Valluvar has thought about various aspects of interpersonal communication and offers his ideas on the subject.

Self-restraint:

Among the several virtues advocated by Valluvar, self-restraint is one of them. He believes that one should control one's tongue and exercise self-restraint when speaking to others. He says

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that a single hurtful word would destroy all the positive outcomes from all the good and kind words (Thirukkural – 128). The injury caused by a burn heals, but not the scar caused by an offending word (Thirukkural – 129). Therefore, one should take steps to control one's tongue, even if one cannot control other things (Thirukkural – 127).

Understanding one's mind:

In public speaking, the speaker is advised to observe the level of understanding and the audience's mood so that he can adjust his remarks. So also, during interpersonal communications, it is advantageous to be able to understand what is in the other person's mind. Valluvar observes that an individual's face clearly depicts what is in his mind, like a mirror reflecting the objects in front of it. According to him, through our eyes, it is possible to read the facial expressions of others and thereby understand what is in their mind. In fact, he claims that it is the primary purpose of the eyes to observe others' faces and decode what is in their minds. Perhaps everyone may not be so observant. That is why Valluvar says that it is a rare ability to read others' minds by observing their faces and a person with such a gifted ability is indeed divine.

As the mirror reflects what is in front of it, the face portrays what is in the mind.

(Thirukkural – 706)

Is there anything more intelligent than the face to reveal one's joy or ire?

(Thirukkural – 707)

What use are the eyes if they cannot sense others' minds?

(Thirukkural – 705)

He who can read others' minds beyond doubt is comparable to God.

(Thirukkural – 702)

Speaking kind and pleasing words:

In addition to exercising self-restraint, Valluvar suggests that one should use kind and pleasing words. He says that humility and pleasant speech are the real ornaments for a man and other ornaments are not real ornaments (Thirukkural – 95). When a man knows that kind words bring joy and happiness, he wonders why he should resort to harsh words (Thirukkural – 99)? He also asserts that using harsh words instead of kind and pleasant ones is like preferring raw fruits when ripe ones are available (Thirukkural – 100). From these statements, it is clear that Valluvar advocates the use of kind and pleasant words in conversation with others.

Listening during inter-personal communication:

It is important that during a conversation, one should listen to the other person with whom one is trying to communicate instead of focusing attention only on expressing oneself. In other words, the communication should be bilateral instead of being one-sided.

When flawless people speak, they speak in such a manner that the listener is eager to listen, and they also grasp useful ideas from the listener. (Thirukkural – 646)

The above Thirukkural couplet implies that the ideal way to communicate should be based on useful exchange of ideas among the people involved in the conversation.

Avoiding idle talk and slander:

When people are engaged in conversations, it is not unusual for them to talk about themselves or about other people. Valluvar advises against indulging in useless conversations and slanderous talks about others. He has reserved a chapter for “Idle Talk” and another for “Slander,” where he condemns them in very strong terms. The following two Thirukkural couplets are samples from those chapters, and they clearly show his disapproval of idle talk and slander.

Call him not a man who utters vain words. He is indeed chaff among men.
(Thirukkural – 196)

It is better to die than to live by backbiting, as death may confer the fruit of righteousness. (Thirukkural – 183)

Being truthful and credible:

Being truthful is a virtue. Valluvar has a rather liberal definition of truth. According to him, truth is speaking that which is free from even the slightest taint of evil (Thirukkural - 291). This definition of truth excludes all evil that can result from one's speech. For example, his definition of truth excludes uttering statements that could cause any harm or hurt to anyone. A person who says things that mentally hurt another person or cause physical harm cannot be effective in interpersonal communication. Such a person loses his credibility, and therefore others will shun him. Another type of people who cannot be effective in interpersonal communication are those whose words do not match their deeds. Valluvar says that association with those whose words and deeds do not match is bitter even in the dream (Thirukkural - 819). So, credibility and truthfulness are necessary to be effective in interpersonal communications.

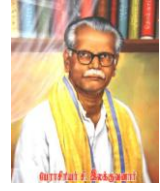
Conclusion

It is truly amazing that 2000 years ago, Valluvar could think of analyzing many aspects of communication, including public speaking and interpersonal communication, and his observations are valid even today. His ideas regarding the importance of mastery of the subject matter, being unafraid before an audience, understanding the audience, using the right words, and captivating the audience are indeed valid and valuable advice to a public speaker even in the modern days. Similarly, using kind and pleasant words, establishing credibility by being truthful, and having the ability to read others' minds through their facial expressions are truly useful advice in the context of interpersonal communication.



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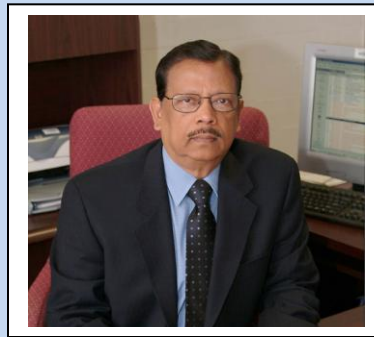
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Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen



Dr.R.Prabhakaran

Letter from our Honorary Editor ThirukThirukkural Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Dear friends,

Vanakkam.

As you perhaps know that I was working with Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen, former minister of Mauritius and Director of UNESCO, to get UNESCO to

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recognize ThirukThirukkural as a “Book of Universal Literature.” For UNESCO to recognize ThirukThirukkural as a “Book of Universal Literature,” a formal request must be sent from the Government of India through India’s Ambassador to the UN. We approached several sources, including the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Central Institute of Classical Tamil, and requested them to send a formal request to the Prime Minister to take the initiative. Although they were all enthusiastic and willing to support our request, they did not have the right opportunity to approach the Prime Minister.

Finally, last week, Mr. Ravi Kumar, President of ThirukThirukkural Malai Sangam, and Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen met with the Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, and gave him all the relevant documents and requested him to take the initiative. The Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi immediately agreed with our proposal and said he would take the necessary action to follow up. Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen told me that the meeting with the Prime Minister was very successful.

It looks like a formal request will be sent to UNESCO soon requesting that a statue of Thiruvalluvar be installed at the premises of UNESCO, recognize ThirukThirukkural as a “Book of Universal Literature,” and establish a medal in the name of Thiruvalluvar.

My role was to develop the necessary documents and support Dr. Armooum Parsuramaen. Major credit goes to Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen.

If everything goes well, we plan to organize an International ThirukThirukkural Conference in Paris, where UNESCO's headquarters is located, and celebrate UNESCO's recognition of ThirukThirukkural. By the way, ThirukThirukkural will be the first book to be recognized by UNESCO as a "Book of Universal Literature."

anbudan,

Prabhakaran.

Our heartiest congratulations for this glorious accomplishment. (ed.)

An economist with human welfare at heart

-- Dharmalingam Venugopal

Dr. B. Natarajan (1909-1984) should be remembered as an applied economist of rare distinction, whose economic predictions as well as policy prescriptions have greatly benefited the country, particularly Tamil Nadu. A socialist at heart, he welcomed every means to further human welfare. He decried the growing tendency of 'Maa-Baapism', which had made the people dependent on the government for anything and everything. He called his memoirs appropriately, 'Economics is not all', meaning economics without ethics and morality is meaningless. Economic humanism should underlie an economist's work, according to him.

Born into an agricultural family in the southern tip of the country, Dr. BN, as he was known, started his career in Delhi under Sir Theodore Gregory, the first economic adviser to the Government of India in the years immediately preceding Independence. Later, he became the first and the last Economic Adviser to the government of Composite Madras State in 1948. During the five years he held the post, he blazed many a new trail in planning and economic administration. His office became the forerunner of the Department of Statistics.

When Andhra Pradesh was created in 1953, its first Chief Minister Sri. T. Prakasam appointed Dr. BN as its Economic Adviser, Development Commissioner and Secretary, Planning. Though he occupied the post only for two years, Dr. BN set up the Department of Statistics and prepared several blueprints for its industrial and agricultural progress.

Dr. BN served as U.N. Economic Adviser to Egypt and Syria but gave up the assignment in response to a call to serve his home State as a legislator. He won by a thumping majority from Nagarcoil but was soon disillusioned with the government's functioning and returned to economic research before his term ended. Associated with the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) from its inception, Dr. BN became its Deputy Director-General. Though Dr. BN was not much in favour of quantification in economics, he pioneered studies on the national income and techno-economic surveys of various States.

After his retirement, he set up the Institute for Techno-Economic Studies in Madras (now Chennai). The reports "Tamil Nadu 2000 AD" and "Tamil Nadu 2020 AD" commissioned by the Ford Foundation in the 1970s forecast the shape of things to come with remarkable accuracy. "Economics is often deprecated for its incapacity to predict. But of late, it has evolved quite a few tools for projections and predictions," he said.

The national Futurology Workshops he organised on topical issues like housing, water management and transport greatly helped planners and policymakers to anticipate long-term problems as well as potentials. His study of the London Passenger Transport System eventually prepared the way for the State transport undertaking in the Madras State. After making a detailed study of crop insurance in Japan in the 1950s, he proposed a universal crop insurance scheme for the Madras State. An ardent supporter of the interlinking of rivers, Dr. BN never lost an opportunity to strike a blow for schemes like the Ganga-Cauvery link, the Grand Garland Canal project and the diversion of the west flowing rivers in southern India.

An erudite scholar in English and Tamil, Dr. BN rendered great works like TiruThirukkural, Thirumanthiram and Tiruvundiar into English. "Tamil can be truly

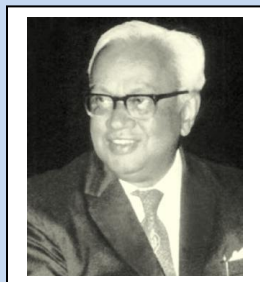
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glorified only by those who have mastered English” he would often say. He died on his 75th birthday in 1984.

-MAY 16, 2010

Economic Ideas of Thiruvalluvar

--Dr. B. Natarajan



Our founder Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar was not only a colleague of Dr.B.Natarajan, while he worked as an HOD of Tamil department (1955-57) but remained as a friend philosopher as well as good counsel. Both scholars were ardent admirers of Thirumanthiram and this friendship was helpful for Dr.B.Natarajan to translate Thirumantghiram. I remember They convened a conference on Thirumanthiram at Aralvoymozhi during 1956.

While Dr.B.Natarajan left the college to assume the post of Economical adviser, Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar became the Principal by virtue of his seniority, but got much troubles by anti-Natarajan rival group who remained silent during Dr.B.Natarajan's tenure.

Valluvar's work was intended as an appeal to a wide public. He was not merely a scholar talking to a scholar, but a prophet exhorting his people to a course of action which he considered the sanest for a glorious life. 'Tis was a poetry, not written for poetry's sake, nor to extol the virtues and largesses of a patron chieftain in any expectant emotion, as was the fashion in the Sangam Age, and even after, but a poetry with a purpose, a theme with a moral to tell, If in the process, he succeeded in the role of the Ancient Mariner and held 'his wedding-guest with the glittering eye of poetry' and 'made him stand still and listen like a three-year child' it was simply that Valluvar 'had his will.' It was the acme of supreme art. And so, it was no accident that he chose the couplet verse as the medium of communication. Valluvar was a democrat in thought and form. Democratic thought had to assume a democratic form. And so was the Kaval metre chosen. It was a choice, deliberate and purposive. It meant a signal departure

from all that had gone before in Tamil poetry. Yet it was the aptest medium of communication for the achievement of the poet's purpose. In that age when literacy by ear was as important as literacy by the eye, memorising played a vital role in the imparting of education; and nothing could aid this audio-education better than a simple couplet, almost as easy to get currency as a housewife's aphorism, and as likely to be effective in the guidance of day-to-day conduct in life. Ten was the number beyond which counting was difficult for the masses, and imprisoning all essential thoughts on a subject within ten couplets was to ensure that nothing worth-while was missed. The uniformity this form spelt meant some risk to the freedom and excellence of poetical expression. Lesser men who attempted to handle it have later failed. But Valluvar had the supreme confidence of the born poet. He knew what he was about. The medium was but the means to the end. He could choose what medium he willed, and yet make a success of it.

The wonder is not that he chose the medium but that he succeeded so well with it. Even the most imaginative poetic thoughts and poetic imageries found no obstruction or hesitation in their free expression. Thought was not sacrificed to Form, neither Form to Thought. The right thought in the right form—an achievement unique in the history of poetry down the ages. Not once does the form flag or begin to stale. In fact, as the work moves on to the themes of love and War, which ordinarily might have been better expressed in freer and spacious meters, the tiny couplet rises to the occasion and performs ever imaginative feats—a 'sheer miracle which only a Master Poet could have achieved.

This lecture is intended to serve mainly as the background for an understanding of the lectures that follow. I shall, therefore, re-state briefly its main ideas:

1, For Valluvar, life is an integrated whole. ThirukThirukkural is the postulation of philosophy as a way of life and a way of living according to a philosophy. It is Pragmatic Idealism.

2. In justifying the demands of the Ideal to the needs of the Pragmatic, Thiruvalluvar knew no contradictions or inconsistencies. The contradictions and inconsistencies are more appearances than real, In this he is in company of the greatest world teachers like Jesus Christ, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Mahatma Gandhi.

3. ThirukThirukkural is a work of synthesis, Thiruvalluvar sought to synthesise the two eternal tendencies in human history, life affirmation and life negation.

4. As these two tendencies are eternally recurring in a rhythm all through history, and among all nations and peoples, the synthesis acquires a permanent and pervasive significance.

5. Yet the work must have had an immediate purpose; to lead his people back to a positive way of life, without losing the values that the negative way of life had to teach.

6. His was a democratic mission. Thirukkural was not intended merely for the chosen few. Valluvar was a democrat in life and thought; and Thirukkural is democratic in form, content and appeal.

7. The choice of form was deliberate and purposive. It was the one that could best serve the democratic purpose. But it has great limitations as a vehicle of poetical expression, Valluvar risked it in the interest of his democratic cause. But the success he made of it is a miracle in the history of poetical expression.

Even the subtlest nuances of emotion and shades of thought and poetical conceits were successfully expressed. A genius alone could do this.

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Valluvar - Humanist or a Humanitarian?

--Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Introduction

Thiruvalluvar, also known as Valluvar, was a Tamil philosopher who authored a remarkable book called Thirukkural, or the Thirukkural for short. The Thirukkural is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 couplets or Thirukkural of seven words each. The text is divided into three books with aphoristic teachings on virtue, wealth, and love. The Thirukkural is considered one of the greatest works ever written on ethics and morality. In the Thirukkural, Valluvar emphasizes equality, rationalism, morality, ethics, love, compassion, charity, and munificence as essential virtues to be practiced by everyone. A deep study of the Thirukkural reveals close similarities between the virtues emphasized by Valluvar and the modern concepts of humanism and humanitarianism. This essay compares Valluvar's ideas with the concepts of humanism and humanitarianism.

Humanism

Humanism and humanitarianism are two different philosophies. But, sometimes, people fail to grasp the inherent differences between these two concepts and use them interchangeably in their writings and conversations. According to the Humanist Manifesto III adopted in 2003, "Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of

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fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity." Prof. Stephen Law, a British philosopher and senior lecturer at the University of London, summarizes the basic beliefs of humanism as follows:

- Humanists believe that science and reason should apply to all areas of life. No beliefs should be considered off-limits and be protected from rational scrutiny.
- Humanists are either atheists or at least agnostics. They are also skeptical about the existence of angels, demons, and other such supernatural beings.
- Humanists do not believe in reincarnation. They also reject the existence of a soul.
- Humanists strongly believe in the importance of moral values. They believe that moral and ethical values are derived from human needs and interests as tested by experience, and they should not be based on religious values.
- Life's fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals.
- Humanists believe that working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.

According to a Humanist Magazine, "Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. It derives its goals of life from human needs and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its destiny." Many prominent

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scientists, Nobel laureates, doctors, philosophers, authors, and scholars who are humanists subscribe to the ideologies of rationalism, atheism, or agnosticism. They seem to have a sincere concern for human welfare and believe in the human ability to solve human problems without any help from supernatural powers.

Valluvar and Humanism

Valluvar and religion: Valluvar does mention God in some of the Thirukkural. In Thirukkural 1, he mentions that God is first in this world, just as the letter "A "is first among the alphabets. Although he does not explicitly state that God created this world, this Thirukkural is interpreted by many commentators to imply Valluvar's faith in God as the Creator. In Thirukkural 5, Valluvar says that the good and evil consequences arising from the actions based on the darkness of illusion (ignorance) shall not impact those who delight in praise of God. In Thirukkural 2, he asks, "What does one gain from all the learning, if one does not worship the good feet of Him who is the personification of pure knowledge?" Valluvar also believes in the existence of a soul, which takes a series of incarnations. In fact, he says that death is like sleep, and birth is the awakening from it (Thirukkural - 339). He wonders whether there is no permanent place for the soul, which leaves the body at the time of death like the fledgling that flees its nest when it is ready to fly (Thirukkural – 340). The Thirukkural couplets 339 and 340 imply that the human soul is permanent, and the human body is only a temporary abode for the human soul. Like the sleep and the awakening, a soul keeps taking incarnations one after the other. Valluvar offers two solutions to sever the chain of births and deaths. In Thirukkural 10, he says that those who become united with God will be able to cross the ocean of births

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and deaths (Thirukkural – 10). In Thirukkural 349, he opines that in order to be free from future births, one should eliminate all attachments that arise out of desires. There are also other Thirukkural couplets that point to Valluvar's beliefs in God, soul, and reincarnations.

It is clear that Valluvar believes in God, and he also believes in the permanence of the human soul and that it undergoes an unending sequence of incarnations. These beliefs of Valluvar are not based on any of the three religions (Vedic Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Jainism) that existed during his period. He differs significantly from the three religions of his time. These are his own beliefs based on his own reasoning. In view of his own faith-based beliefs, Valluvar cannot be considered an atheist or an agnostic. However, since his views do not represent any particular religion and due to the fact that he does not advocate any specific religion, Valluvar can be considered a secular philosopher who is an independent thinker.

Valluvar and rationalism: Rationalism is a belief or a theory that opinions and actions should be based on reason and knowledge rather than on religious beliefs or emotional responses. Obviously, since atheists and agnostics do not have any religious beliefs, they support rationalism and consider it the methodology for arriving at the truth. However, it should be mentioned that rationalism does not help to explain or understand everything. It has its own limitations. For example, if a rationalist is asked, "Where did the universe come from?" his response would be, "It came as a result of the Big Bang, which occurred about 14 billion years ago." However, at present, the rationalists and the cosmologists do not have any answers to questions like, "Why did the Big Bang

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occur?", "What was there before the Big Bang?" Anthropologists estimate that human beings have been living on earth for almost 200,000 years. So, it has taken nearly 200,000 years to come up with the Big Bang theory. Therefore, it is uncertain if and when science can offer additional explanations to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Also, it is quite likely that there could always be a question for which the science may not have an answer. Therefore, when it comes to questions like the universe and its origin, an ordinary individual has three options. One option is to take the answers provided by science and wait for the science to come up with further explanations. The second option is to be completely indifferent and ignore such questions as irrelevant. The third option is to assume that there has to be a Creator who is omnipotent and responsible for all that is created. From a practical standpoint, all three options are equally valid and viable. From the Thirukkural, it appears that Valluvar believes in the last of the three options mentioned above.

Believing in God does not imply that one cannot be rational in other areas of investigations. For example, in the past, there have been several well-known scientists who believed in a Creator and perhaps even belonged to a religion of their choice. Even now, there are many scientists who believe in God or a higher power. According to a survey of the scientists who are members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science conducted in 2009 by the Pew Research Center, a non-partisan fact tank located in Washington D. C., 51% of scientists believed in God or a universal spirit or a higher power. In fact, 33% of the scientists believed in God, and 18% believed in a universal spirit or a higher power. Their religious beliefs do not seem

to cloud their scientific thinking. Similarly, in the case of Valluvar, his belief in God does not hinder his ability to have a rational outlook on other matters. For example, he insists, "Whatever be the apparent nature of things, it is wise to investigate their true nature (Thirukkural – 355)." Free inquiry into the nature of things is the basis of science. Valluvar's suggestion that one should investigate the true nature of things is entirely compatible with rational thinking and scientific methodologies. He also states, "True wisdom is to discern the truth in whatever is said by whomsoever (Thirukkural – 423)." The idea behind this Thirukkural is somewhat similar to that of Thirukkural 355. Based on Thirukkural 423, one can conclude that Valluvar is open to the inquiry of all statements made by anyone. A typical religious person would not be open to questioning his own religious dogmas. Since Valluvar does not endorse any religion as the ultimate truth, he is open to the inquiry of all statements made by anyone. According to him, individuals should investigate and believe whatever they feel comfortable with and should not blindly follow any faith. The Thirukkural mentioned above are consistent with the humanists' philosophy that "No beliefs should be considered off-limits and be protected from rational scrutiny."

Valluvar and Human Effort

The humanists depend upon their effort to accomplish their objectives. Since they do not believe in God or other supernatural powers, they do not expect any help from such non-existent entities. Most religious people believe in human effort as a necessary requirement for achieving their objectives. They may believe that total reliance on human effort alone may not be sufficient. They may believe in the power of

prayer and hope that praying to God may help to accomplish their objectives. Of course, this is an entirely a question of personal preference based on one's convictions. As mentioned before, Valluvar believes in God. But despite his belief in God, he emphasizes determination, dedication, and persistent hard work as the necessary factors to accomplish one's objectives in life. He does not mention prayer as a prerequisite for accomplishing one's objectives in worldly affairs. His emphasis is on self-reliance rather than on religious beliefs. He says, "One should not feel disheartened when a task seems impossible; persistent efforts will lead to greatness (Thirukkural – 611)." He also believes that persistent hard work will bring about good fortune, and indolence will bring about poverty (Thirukkural – 616). Valluvar is pragmatic, and he realizes that despite persistent hard work, there may be unforeseen random events that could interfere with one's ability to accomplish one's objectives. He says, "What is more powerful than unpredictable random events (fate)? Even if one plans to overcome them, they will interfere with one's plans (Thirukkural – 380)." Although he realizes the inevitability of unexpected interruptions to one's plans, Valluvar believes, "People who work hard with ceaseless industry will overcome the obstacles created by the unpredictable random events (Thirukkural - 620)." Valluvar's proposed solution to all adversities and obstacles on the path to success is to laugh at them and face them boldly. He says, "Laugh at adversity; there is nothing better than laughter to overcome adversity (Thirukkural – 621)." In addition to offering encouragement and support for persistent hard work, he also says, "Even if gods do not help you, your hard work will certainly be rewarded (Thirukkural – 619)." So, it is clear that Valluvar's advice to achieve success in life is self-reliance and hard work and not prayer. Valluvar's

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emphasis on hard work rather than dependence on prayer is similar to the humanist philosophy of self-reliance.

Valluvar and moral values: Moral values are discussed throughout the Thirukkural. However, the section on Virtue is entirely dedicated to moral values and ethical behavior. Valluvar's ideas on virtue can be grouped into two major categories. One is the set of ideas which are about behaviors and practices that one should avoid. The other is the set of ideas about the pursuit of positive behaviors and practices intended to help others without expecting anything in return.

Valluvar believes in the equality of all human beings. He denounces the prevalent class system during his period and declares that all are equal by birth. In fact, he declares, "All human beings are equal by birth; but distinctions arise only because of the different qualities of their actions (Thirukkural – 972)." He insists that everyone should have empathy for his fellow human beings. He wonders, "If one cannot treat others' sufferings as his own, what benefit has one gained from his intelligence (Thirukkural – 315)?" He cannot comprehend "Why does a man inflict upon other living beings those things he found harmful to himself (Thirukkural – 318)?"

Valluvar's idea of nonviolence is reminiscent of the so-called Golden Rule, which states, "Do not do unto others what you don't want others to do unto you." Although this version of the Golden Rule is attributed to the Chinese Philosopher Confucius, this moral axiom appears in various forms in the writings of almost every culture and religion throughout history. It must be mentioned that Valluvar goes above and beyond the Golden Rule

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when he suggests, "The proper punishment for the one who has done evil to you is to do him something good in return and make him feel ashamed of himself (Thirukkural – 314)." According to Valluvar, "It is the supreme virtue not to have a harmful thought about anybody in any degree at any moment (Thirukkural 317)." Since thought precedes the words and the deeds, if one does not have an evil thought in his mind, then he would not hurt others' feelings by uttering harsh words and harm others by his actions.

According to humanists, moral and ethical values are derived from human needs and interests as tested by experience, and they should not be based on religious values. For example, the humanists are in total agreement with the Golden Rule. In the view of Greg M. Epstein, a Humanist Chaplain at the Harvard University, "The Golden Rule is a concept that essentially no religion misses entirely. But not even one of these versions of the golden rule requires a God." Likewise, Valluvar's ideas regarding equality, empathy, avoiding evil thoughts, harsh words, and harmful deeds towards others are based on socially acceptable good conduct rules. They are not based on religious mandates. From his point of view, they represent acceptable and ethical human behavior, and they are the right code of conduct in the interest of the individual and society. So, Valluvar's views on moral values are completely consistent with those of the humanists.

Humanitarianism

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Humanitarianism can be defined as an ethical doctrine that emphasizes the concern and action towards human welfare and social reform. A true humanitarian strives to promote human welfare and social reforms and has no prejudice based on gender, sexual orientation, religion, or race. A humanitarian's goal is to save lives, relieve suffering, provide food and shelter, and medical assistance for the poor, homeless, and the needy out of kindness and compassion. In the course of human history, there have been many humanitarians. They have either contributed large sums of money or personally engaged in services aimed at eradicating diseases, feeding the poor, providing medical assistance to the needy, educating the underprivileged, etc. Although the humanists have humanitarianism as one of their basic principles, the humanitarians are the ones who seem to put the principles into practice. Unlike the humanists, the humanitarians are not necessarily atheists or agnostics. Religious affiliation is neither a necessity nor a hindrance to one's humanitarian pursuits. In the case of some humanitarians, religion can motivate them to dedicate their lives and resources to humanitarian projects in anticipation of benefits in the other world.

Valluvar emphasizes the importance of love and compassion in several Thirukkural. He says, "Love is the quintessence of life; without it, a man is nothing but a frame of bones covered with skin (Thirukkural 80)." He adds, "The soul is linked with the body because of its inborn relationship with love (Thirukkural – 73)." In other words, he contends that love towards fellow human beings is an inherent human emotion in a human being. But this inherent noble emotion in the human mind is often hidden and suppressed by the pollutants like envy, covetousness, anger, greed, etc. According to

Valluvar, "Having a mind free of pollutants (blemishes or impure thoughts) is the true virtue; all else is an empty show (Thirukkural – 34)." Valluvar encourages his readers to recognize this and develop a mind which is free of pollutants and follow the path of love. He is of the opinion that "Those who are destitute of love will keep everything to themselves, but those who possess love will give even their bones to others (Thirukkural 72)." In Valluvar's scheme of things, compassion is an outgrowth of love. Love and compassion motivate one to share his food, wealth, and all resources at his disposal with others who are in need.

In addition to love and compassion, Valluvar firmly believes in the equality of all human beings. He is also convinced that intelligence in a human being should evoke a feeling of empathy for others' sufferings. The combination of love, compassion, feeling of equality, and empathy for others' sufferings makes one a natural humanitarian. It is this humanitarian feeling of Valluvar that manifests itself in the form of his insistence on hospitality even towards strangers, sharing one's resources with others who need help.

During the days of Valluvar, there were no hotels or restaurants where travelers could stay or feed themselves during the course of their travels. Valluvar strongly recommends that hospitality towards the travelers - even if they are strangers - is the duty of a householder. He says, "The purpose of leading a family life is to entertain (provide food and shelter) guests (Thirukkural – 81)." He adds, "Even if you were consuming the nectar of immortality, you should share it with your guests (Thirukkural – 82)." It should be noted that in the terminology of the Thirukkural, guests refer to strangers and not relatives.

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Valluvar considers charity and munificence as two essential virtues to be practiced by everyone. According to him, "Giving to the needy alone is real charity; all the rest is an investment in anticipation of a return (Thirukkural – 221)." To him, an act of charity is something that one should do out of compassion and kindness. He insists that an act of charity has to be carried out even if there is no heavenly reward (Thirukkural – 222). Valluvar attaches so much importance to charity that he says, "Nothing is more painful than death; even death will be sweet if one finds himself unable to relieve the distress of others (Thirukkural – 230). "

In addition to charity, Valluvar also proposes that one should practice munificence. Charity is a way of helping someone who asks for help. Munificence refers to acts of generosity aimed at a large number of people. Valluvar's emphasis on munificence is evident when he says, "All the wealth gained from hard work is to serve the deserving others (Thirukkural - 212)." Valluvar's model for munificence is the rain-bearing cloud. He says, "Munificence does not expect anything in return. What can the world give back in return to the rain-bearing clouds (Thirukkural -211)?" In Valluvar's opinion, "Only those who know and practice munificence are the ones who can be considered as truly living; others will be reckoned with the dead (Thirukkural - 214)."

Valluvar considers that the humanitarian acts of hospitality, charity, and munificence result from love, kindness, compassion, and empathy, and they are not religious mandates. They are to be done without expecting any reward in this world or in the next world.

Conclusion

In the absence of any reliable biographic information, one cannot say anything with absolute certainty about the personal life of Valluvar. But, based on his work, we can arrive at some logical conclusions. In Thirukkural 819, Valluvar says, “Association with those whose words and deeds do not match is bitter even in dreams.” Since he stresses the need for consistency between one’s words and deeds, it is reasonable to assume that his behavior would have been consistent with his philosophy. He can be considered a secular humanist based on his secular outlook, advocacy for rationalism, emphasis on self-reliance, insistence on human efforts, and love of humanity. His emphasis on hospitality, charity, and munificence is a testament to his humanitarianism. So, it is reasonable to conclude that Valluvar must have been a secular humanist who was also a humanitarian extraordinaire.

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Justice R.Sureshkumar

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How many of us follow Thirukkural?

A Thought-provoking question from Justice R.Sureshkumar

Chennai-June19

The Chengalpattu District wing of International Thirukkural Federation celebrated its 14th anniversary this evening.

Poet Puthugai Vetrivelan, President of this wing presided over the function.

Puthugai Mu.Dharmarajan, Editor of a Tamil monthly “PuthugaiThendral”, P.Manikandan, T.P.Elangovan, Founder-President of Chrompet Thirukkural association, Dr.Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar, Founder-Editor of KuralNeri e-zine group spoke on the occasion.

Five veteran Tamil scholars were awarded with a cash-prize of Rupees Five Thousand each in appreciation of their outstanding contribution to Tamil language and literature.

Justice R.Sureshkumar of Madras High court presented the cash awards and delivered an address.

In his address the Hon’ble Justice asked this thought-provoking question.

Here we are glad to share a part of his lecture:

“I am very glad to participate in a forum which propagates Thirukkural, the noble guide to humankind to lead an exemplary life and attain bliss and happiness by achieving international brotherhood.

While there are innumerable translations in numerous languages and hundreds of commentaries for it by scholars, we can't answer a question.

- How many of us follow Thirukkural?

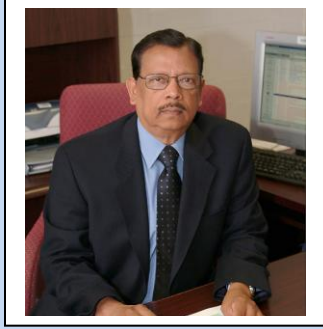
We should read Thirukkural and try our level-best to follow the maxims given to us by this universal scripture. If we follow Thirukkural at least to some extent then we can boast of the proud possession of the Tamil community dedicated to universal peace as ours.

Here in this function many students are awarded with prizes for various competitions on Thirukkural. Whether it is Thirukkural recital, essay-writing about Thirukkural or oratorical competitions about Thirukkural that doesn't matter. I am quite happy to find students spending their time to read Thirukkural, to prepare themselves for their participation and attempting to express their knowledge of Thirukkural.

I am sure Thirukkural is the panacea for all the social evils upsetting the world and disturbing the humankind in various angles. I extend my appeal to the youth to read and practice the valuable advices given by Thirukkural thereby elevating them to higher positions in life.”

Thiruvalluvar's Sanron and Confucius' Gentleman

Dr. R. Prabhakaran



Introduction

The quest for perfection in every facet of life has been part of human aspirations throughout human history. In particular, scholars, philosophers, and sages from various parts of the world have conducted inquiries into ethical, moral, and philosophical aspects of the nature of man to arrive at the ideal characteristics of a perfect man. For example, philosophers like Socrates (468 BC – 399 BC), Plato (427 BC – 347 BC), Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC), Confucius (551 BC – 479 BC), Seneca (4 BC – 65 AD), Thiruvalluvar (31 BC - ?), Marcus Aurelius (121 AD - 180 AD), John Henry Cardinal Newman (1801 AD - 1890 AD) and others have delved deep into

the ethics and morality of human behavior and have attempted to define the most desirable characteristics for a human being. Due to inherent differences in culture and societal norms, the qualities considered essential in a perfect man seem to vary from one society to the other. But the differences seem to be only in the details. Certain fundamental human qualities that are considered essential in a perfect man seem to be more or less similar in all cultures.

The Tamil poet and philosopher Valluvar and the Chinese philosopher Confucius have considered the essential characteristics of a perfect man. These two philosophers lived in different periods of time, in different cultures, and in different political, economic, social, and religious environments. Their backgrounds were so different that one would hardly expect any commonality in their views. Surprisingly, both these philosophers seem to agree on many qualities that are considered essential in a perfect man.

Valluvar's Sanron

According to Valluvar, all are born equal, but the distinctions arise only because of disparity in their deeds (Thirukkural– 972). The apparent equality at birth disappears as the individual progresses in his life. The individual is judged by the society based on his attitudes, accomplishments, character, and contributions. This leads to the question, "what are the most desirable characteristics of an ideal man?" If this question can be answered, those who want to be considered the ideal men can develop those characteristics. In Tamil, the word Sanron refers to a person with "saalbu" which means "full of excellence, good qualities, character, and nobility". All good qualities are included in full measure in saalbu. Although it is difficult to precisely define what saalbu is, it is not difficult to comprehend. The term Sanron is used extensively in Tamil literature to mean a man of perfection. Valluvar also uses the word Sanron to refer to a man of perfection or one with saalbu. Since there is no equivalent word in English for the Tamil word sanron, it is better to use the Tamil word "sanron" to refer to an ideal

or a perfect man. The first reference to Sanron in Thirukkural can be found in Thirukkural-69.

A mother feels greater joy than at his birth when she hears that her son is hailed as “Sanron” by other people.

(Thirukkural - 69)

It is interesting to note that according to Valluvar, the mother rejoices more than when she gave birth to her son, only when she hears that her son is a Sanron; not a king, a war hero, a wealthy man, a scholar, or otherwise accomplished in some other manner. From this Thirukkural it is clear that from the point of view of Valluvar, being a Sanron is the ideal and the most cherished objective.

How does one become a Sanron? What qualities should one possess to be considered a Sanron? Since being a Sanron is of paramount importance, Valluvar discusses the qualities and characteristics of a Sanron very extensively in many Thirukkural couplets throughout the Thirukkural. In

fact, Valluvar dedicates a whole chapter (Chapter 99) in the Thirukkural to describe the qualities and characteristics of a Sanron. In addition to the ten Thirukkural couplets in that chapter, he refers to the qualities of Sanron in 59 other Thirukkural couplets. Some Thirukkural couplets describe them directly and some others describe them indirectly. The most fundamental quality of a Sanron is his good character. But then, what constitutes good character? Typically, Valluvar avoids specific details or providing a list of what constitutes good character or good conduct. One would intuitively as well as by experience, know what is considered good conduct as determined by the wise people of the land or location where one lives. Adhering to what society considers good is the only guideline we can infer from the Thirukkural regarding good conduct. Therefore, it is the duty of a Sanron to do everything that is considered good. For those pursuing the path of perfection, it is their duty to do everything that is considered good.

(Thirukkural - 981)

Consistent adherence to the practice of good conduct is a constant necessity for a Sanron. Irrespective of the circumstances, he does not deviate from steadfast adherence to good conduct. This idea is described in the following Thirukkural:

In the midst of an apocalypse, an ocean may cross its shores; but even under catastrophic conditions, men of perfection who are said to be the shore of the sea of perfection will not swerve from the path of righteousness. (Thirukkural - 989)

It may appear that the conditions stipulated in Thirukkural couplets 981 and 989 described above are highly impractical concepts for anyone to follow. However, the exemplary lives of extraordinary individuals like Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948), Mother Theresa (1910 – 1997), Nelson Mandela (1918 – 2013), Periyar E. V. Ramasamy (1879 – 1973), and others like them validate the feasibility of the concepts described by Valluvar in these Thirukkural couplets. Mahatma Gandhi fought tirelessly for India's independence not because of any anticipated personal gain. He

was convinced that it was the right thing to do, and he considered that it was his duty to do the right thing. The selfless sacrifices of Mother Theresa to help the impoverished and uncared-for people and the endless sufferings of Nelson Mandela in his fight to eliminate apartheid and achieve South Africa's freedom were based on the conviction to do the right thing against all odds. Another example of a man who dedicated his life to social reforms in Tamil Nadu (the state in India where Valluvar was born) would be Periyar E. V. Ramasamy. He worked tirelessly to promote rationalism, self-respect, women's rights, eradication of castes, and establish equal rights for the downtrodden communities because he thought that was the right thing to do. The United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized him as "the prophet of the new age, the Socrates of South East Asia, father of social reform movement and an arch-enemy of ignorance, superstitions, meaningless customs, and base manners."

In addition to the two Thirukkural couplets mentioned above, Valluvar delineates the various aspects of a Sanron's characteristics in other

Thirukkural couplets. A careful analysis of all the references to the word Sanron helps to develop a comprehensive image of a Sanron.

Characteristics of a Sanron

One does not become a Sanron by virtue of the class, caste, or family in which one is born. A person is recognized by society as a Sanron only by virtue of his qualities. Therefore, irrespective of one's family background, one can become a Sanron. This is consistent with Valluvar's belief in equality.

Although it is not explicitly stated in Tamil literature, the word Sanron is always associated with one who is full of wisdom and knowledge. Valluvar emphasizes the importance of education to everyone and therefore, it is to be expected that a Sanron is definitely well-educated and a man of wisdom. For a Sanron, possession of knowledge alone is not sufficient.

Humane qualities such as compassion and concern for others are essential

in the makeup of a Sanron. In Thirukkural 983, Valluvar discusses five essential characteristics of a Sanron.

Love, sense of shame, philanthropic munificence, gracious compassion, and truthfulness are the five pillars upon which perfection of character rests. (Thirukkural - 983)

In his book, Valluvar dedicates separate chapters for each of the five qualities mentioned in the above Thirukkural. These five qualities are important for all. But, they are extremely essential for a Sanron. In order to emphasize their importance, he considers these qualities as the five pillars upon which the whole edifice of perfection of character rests.

Love: According to Valluvar, love implies kind and affectionate behavior towards family, friends, and acquaintances. He considers love as the essence of human life. In Thirukkural 73, he says that the very reason the body and the soul are bonded together is to love others. In Thirukkural 72, he says that the people without love keep everything to themselves and the ones with love give even their bones to others. These statements highlight

the importance of love in human life. Among the five required qualities Valluvar lists love as the first and foremost quality for a Sanron.

Sense of Shame: The term “sense of shame” means “being ashamed of things that one ought to be ashamed of.” In Thirukkural 1013, Valluvar states, “Just like a body being the home for life (soul), sense of shame is the home for perfection.” In Thirukkural 1014, he asks, “Is not the sense of shame an ornament for men of perfection? Is not the proud gait of men of perfection without a sense of shame a disease?” From these bold declarations, it is clear that he attaches extraordinary importance to sense of shame as a required quality for a Sanron who is the embodiment of perfection.

Philanthropic Munificence: Philanthropic munificence refers to the attitude and the practice of true philanthropy without the other person asking for help or assistance. When it comes to helping those in need, Valluvar makes a clear distinction between charity and philanthropy. Charity is very basic and instinctively helping when someone asks for help without

expecting anything in return. The term “oppuravu” which is translated as philanthropic munificence implies helping others without being asked for help. In the case of “oppuravu” the individual realizes that the purpose of gathering wealth is to help the deserving people (Thirukkural - 212). Here, the individual acts voluntarily out of compassion with the conviction that it is the right thing to do. This is the type of behavior that is expected from a Sanron.

Gracious compassion: Gracious compassion refers to an indulgent look, benign grace, and consideration for others. This is a profound human emotion prompted by the pain of others. More vigorous than empathy, the feeling of gracious compassion gives rise to an active desire to alleviate others’ suffering. It is often, though not inevitably, the key component in what manifests in the social context as altruism. In ethical terms, the so-called Golden Rule embodies by implication the principle of compassion: “Do to others what you would have them do to you.” Ranked as a great virtue in numerous philosophies, compassion is considered in all the major

religious traditions as among the greatest of virtues. Therefore, it is not surprising to see Valluvar's inclusion of this quality as a requirement for a Sanron.

Valluvar's ideas regarding not harming others either by deed or word deserve special mention in the context of gracious compassion. While other philosophers emphasize "not harming others who harm us" as a good quality, Valluvar emphasizes that a Sanron must be proactively kind and compassionate to even those who harm him. This is much more than what others consider as a good quality. In Thirukkural 987, Valluvar questions the value of perfection if it does not help one to be kind to even those who do harm to him.

Of what use is perfection of character if it does not do good unto those who did evil?

(Thirukkural - 987)

Valluvar conveys the same idea in Thirukkural 314, where he states, “The best punishment for those who do evil to you is to shame them by returning good for evil.”

The natural human tendency is to take revenge upon somebody who does some harm. It requires extraordinary tolerance, magnanimity, and love to ignore the harm done and not act with vengeance. It requires much more mental maturity and genuine kindness to return good for evil. The central idea here is that a Sanron should act with such kindness and return good for evil.

One could harm or hurt another person by speaking ill of them. In Thirukkural 984, Valluvar mentions that a Sanron does not indulge in talking ill of others or talking about others’ shortcomings. This is consistent with the compassionate nature of a Sanron.

Non-killing is the best of penance; so too saalbu implies not talking about others’ faults.

(Thirukkural - 984)

The practice of non-violence and, in particular, not killing any living being is the most essential aspect of the character and conduct of those who undertake penance or follow the path of renunciation. Similarly, Valluvar attaches great significance to the quality of “not speaking ill of others” for a Sanron who follows the path of perfection.

Truthfulness: Valluvar emphasizes truthfulness as an essential quality for everyone. In Thirukkural 34, he asserts that a mind without blemishes is the basis of all virtue and everything else is an empty show. In Thirukkural 298, he says truthfulness cleanses the mind and keeps it pure. Further, he clarifies in Thirukkural 299 that the real lamp that illuminates the path of a Sanron is truthfulness. Therefore, for a Sanron to follow the path of righteousness and virtue, truthfulness is an indispensable quality.

Additional characteristics of a Sanron

In addition to the five essential qualities discussed above, Valluvar mentions other qualities that are important for a Sanron.

Humility: Humility is highly regarded as a virtue by many philosophers. For example, the Roman emperor and philosopher Marcus Aurelius (121 AD – 180 AD) says, “The best revenge is not to copy him that has wronged you.”

The Spanish-born philosopher Seneca (1 BC – 65 AD) states that “Unkindness must be treated with kindness.” According to the Bible (Luke: 18, 14), “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Valluvar also places great emphasis on humility as a virtue to be possessed by a Sanron. This can be seen in Thirukkural couplets 985 and 986.

The strength of men who achieve things lies in their humility. Humility is the instrument with which perfect men transform their enemies.

(Thirukkural - 985)

The touchstone of perfection of character is acknowledging defeat even at the hands of those who are not one’s equals.

(Thirukkural - 986)

Poverty: Valluvar considers that poverty is no disgrace to a Sanron.

Poverty is no disgrace to one, provided there is (in him) the strength called perfection of character.

(Thirukkural - 988)

The extreme poverty of a man of perfection is superior to the wealth amassed through dishonorable means.

(Thirukkural - 657)

As a corollary to the above Thirukkural couplets, one can infer that being wealthy is not a prerequisite for a Sanron.

Justice and Righteousness: Another important aspect of a Sanron is that he is fair, honest, and always on the side of justice on any issue. By being steadfast in the path of justice, he may even encounter adversity. He will not be deterred by adversity and yield to the temptations of being dishonest. This idea is well illustrated in Thirukkural couplets 115 and 118.

Ruin and prosperity have never been non-existent; not to allow one's mind to be swayed (by those factors) is the adornment to men of perfect character. (Thirukkural - 115)

It is the ornament for the men of perfection not to lean on any side but to remain equipoised like a weighing scale that weighs justly.

(Thirukkural - 118)

Idle talk: According to Valluvar, a Sanron should not engage in idle talk.

Men of perfection may at times utter unpleasant words. But, it is better for them not to engage in idle talk.

(Thirukkural - 197)

Adultery: In a civilized society, adultery would be considered an unacceptable behavior. Valluvar has dedicated a chapter (Chapter 15) to condemn adultery.

The real manliness lies in not even having an adulterous thought. Such strength of character is not only a virtue; it is indeed an exemplary conduct for a Sanron. (Thirukkural - 148)

Avoiding Evil Company: Keeping the company of good people is another important character trait of a Sanron. Good company will actually serve as protection for a Sanron.

Although men of perfection are endowed with goodness of mind, it will be strengthened by the goodness of their company.

(Thirukkural - 458)

Avoiding Liquor: There is extensive evidence in Tamil literature to the fact that drinking was acceptable and that it was a prevailing practice in the Tamil community. In spite of that, Valluvar strongly advocates total abstention from the consumption of all alcoholic beverages. However, he was realistic enough and did not expect everyone to adhere to his advice regarding drinking.

Let no liquor be drunk; if it is desired, let it be drunk by those who care not for the esteem of the men of perfection.

(Thirukkural - 922)

From the above Thirukkural, it is clear that a Sanron would not consider drinking, and he would abstain from alcoholic beverages altogether.

The preceding discussion describes Valluvar's ideas of a Sanron as a man of perfection dedicated to doing all that is good and conducting himself in an exemplary manner with the utmost kindness, compassion, truthfulness, philanthropic munificence, and humility towards others in every aspect of his life. Now we will examine the ideas of the other oriental philosopher regarding a man of perfection.

Confucius

Confucius was born in China during the year 551 BC in a poor family in the province of Lu in, China. His father, a commander of a district in Lu, died three years after Confucius was born, leaving his family in poverty; but Confucius nevertheless received a fine education. He worked as a farm worker who took care of parks and farm animals during his early years.

Subsequently, he started traveling about and instructing small groups of disciples who had gathered around him. His fame as a man of learning and good character and his reverence for Chinese ideals and customs soon spread to other principalities of Lu. Mencius, the most prominent disciple of Confucius, declared, “Ever since people came into this world, there has never been anyone greater than Confucius.” Fung Yu-lan, one of the great 20th-century authorities on the history of Chinese thought, compares Confucius’ influence on Chinese history with that of Socrates in the west. In spite of being known as a philosopher and a great teacher, Confucius did not leave any great works of literature. However, many years after his death, his teachings were compiled in the form of a book by his disciples. In Chinese language, the title of the book is Lun Yu. Lun means ‘selected’ and Yu means ‘words’ or ‘statements’. English translation of this book is under the title ‘Analects’ or ‘Analects of Confucius’. The Analects is in the form of a dialogue between Confucius and his disciples. It contains his teachings in the form of quotations. The statements in the Analects that are attributed to

Confucius are short, succinct, and subject to interpretations. The Analects has been translated into several major languages of the world.

Confucian Philosophy

Three key principles are emphasized in Confucius' teachings: the principles of Li, Jen, and Chun-Tzu. The term Li has several meanings, often translated as propriety, reverence, courtesy, ritual or the ideal standard of conduct. It is what Confucius believed to be the ideal standard of religious, moral, and social conduct.

The second key concept is the principle of Jen. It is the fundamental virtue that is basic, universal and the source of all other specific virtues.

Although Confucius considered Jen as the central virtue, he never defined it. There is no single English equivalent of Jen in all its shades of meaning.

The nearest equivalent to the word Jen is "social virtue." All those virtues which help to maintain social harmony and peace like benevolence, charity,

magnanimity, sincerity, respectfulness, altruism, diligence, loving kindness, goodness are included in Jen.

The third important concept is Chun-Tzu. The term Chun-Tzu originally meant the “son of a ruler” and Confucius uses this term extensively to mean a man of virtue and principle, a man whom everyone should imitate. He is the man who lives according to the highest ethical standards. The term chun-tzu has no English equivalent. Many authors use the term “Gentleman” as its English equivalent. If all men would live by the principles of Li and Jen and strive to emulate the character of a Gentleman, justice and harmony would rule the world.

Gentleman

Confucius lived during the second half of Chou dynasty when feudalism degenerated, and China was in a state of disarray. He strongly believed that the only remedy for the deplorable conditions was to convert people to principles and precepts of sages of antiquity. He advocated moral and social virtues, the value of knowledge, good character, and self-

improvement as goals for a Gentleman. Although the Gentleman is worthy of imitation by everyone, Confucius hoped that if the rulers, the princes, and the various bureaucrats would follow the ideals of the Gentleman, the conditions in China would improve. This is the reason why he discusses the characteristics of a Gentleman in very great detail with his disciples. There are more than 100 references in the Analects to Gentleman and the characteristics of a Gentleman.

Confucius on Equality

Although the Tamil society was not deeply entrenched in the caste system during the days of Valluvar, the caste system had begun to have its roots in Tamil society. The Vedic system of dividing people into four major categories was at least known in the Tamil society and some believed in that. The Chinese society also had a class structure. The classes were different and the rules to control the rigidity of the class structure were different. In pre-Confucian China, the feudal system divided the population

into six classes. There were four noble classes with the king at the top, followed by the dukes, then the great men, and finally the scholars. Below the noble classes were commoners and slaves. The confucian doctrine had a significant influence in eliminating certain classes and reorganizing people based on the usefulness of their work to society. In spite of the existence of class structure, Confucius believed that people are equal. “In intrinsic, people are alike. With practice, they diverge (Analects, 17:2).” From this statement, it is clear that Confucius, like Valluvar, believed that people are equal at birth; they only become different based on what they do and how they behave. This leads to the conclusion that for one to be considered a Gentleman, the real criterion is his character and not his birth. This is very similar to the idea portrayed by Valluvar that one becomes a Sanron by being full of virtuous qualities and not by virtue of one’s birth.

Characteristics of a Gentleman

Poverty: On one occasion, when Confucius and his followers were traveling, their food supply was exhausted. At that time, Zi-lu, a fellow traveler and a disciple asked Confucius, “Does a Gentleman encounter poverty as well?” The Master said: “Only a Gentleman can stand poverty. A common man will do whatever is needed to be out of poverty (Analects, 15:2).” On another occasion, Confucius said:

A Gentleman aims at Direction (path or way towards Jen) and not at food. Farming may lead to hunger, as learning may lead to a high-paying life-long position. A Gentleman worries about Direction and not about poverty.

(Analects, 15:32)

Farming may provide food; sometimes, famine may occur, and there could be shortages. Therefore, one cannot conclude that farming is aimed at producing famine. Similarly, learning may lead to a high-paying lifelong position; but it is not necessarily the objective of learning. In the foregoing passages, Confucius makes it very clear that the objective of learning is not necessarily to obtain a high-paying life-long position. It might so happen

that education may lead to a good position and prosperity. But it is not the objective. Irrespective of poverty or prosperity, a Gentleman's focus is always towards self-improvement and towards achieving nobility.

As seen before, according to Valluvar, the poverty encountered by a Sanron is no disgrace to him (Thirukkural - 988). So, there is an obvious similarity between Confucius' idea of a Gentleman's attitude towards poverty and Valluvar's idea regarding the poverty encountered by a Sanron. Valluvar's Sanron and Confucius' Gentleman are indifferent to poverty as well as prosperity and they are steadfast in their goals.

Goodness: In Thirukkural 981, Valluvar makes a very general statement that for those who are following the path of perfection, it is their duty to do everything considered good. Confucius seems to be in agreement with this idea Valluvar. Of all the qualities and virtues of men, Confucius considers Jen as the greatest and most desirable quality. Among other things, for Confucius this term represents humanity, human-heartedness,

benevolence etc. In other words, it stands for the essence of being a good person.

The concept of goodness is vague. But, Confucius offers examples of good behavior that would be characteristic of a Gentleman. The examples include the following: 1) not harming others, 2) having a sense of shame 3) consistency between words and deeds, 4) justice and righteousness, 5) not speaking ill of others, 6) modesty in behavior, and 7) non-drinking.

Not Harming Others: In the chapter on “The Observance of Good Conduct,” Confucius is said to have made the following statement to his disciples:

“That which you disfavor apply not to others (Analects, 12:2).” This is often referred to as the Golden Rule, and the practice of this rule demonstrates the concern for others. Although there is no direct reference that links this statement to one of the desirable qualities of a Gentleman, since Confucius’ Gentleman is one who constantly prepares himself to be the embodiment of all good qualities, it is quite conceivable that this would have been one of the recommended codes of conduct for a Gentleman.

The basic requirement for good conduct towards other people is not to inflict harm on others. Although what is considered as “harm” is relative, everyone has certain notion about “harm” and therefore one should not do to others what one would not like to be done unto oneself. The significance of this statement is that it establishes a metric or a definite guideline for good human behavior. Several other philosophers and sages have expressed similar concepts. Valluvar dedicates an entire chapter for “Not Inflicting Harm” (Chapter 32). In Thirukkural 316, Valluvar conveys the same idea as Confucius. Valluvar states, “What one has realized as causing pain to oneself, should not be inflicted on others (Thirukkural - 316)”. In another Thirukkural, Valluvar goes one step farther than other philosophers and states that the cardinal virtue is not to harm anyone even by thought (Thirukkural 317). As seen before, when it comes to Sanron, Valluvar is very specific and asks, “Of what use is perfection of character if it does not do good unto those who did evil (Thirukkural - 987)?” Thus, Valluvar’s Sanron has not only the responsibility to avoid doing harm to

those who did harm to him; he should also do good deeds to those who did evil deeds to him. This goes beyond what Confucius' recommended code of conduct for a Gentleman. Not harming another person in any manner under any circumstances is the underlying principle to be followed by Confucius' Gentleman as well as Valluvar's Sanron.

Sense of Shame: As seen in Thirukkural 983, Valluvar emphasizes a "sense of shame" as an essential characteristic of Sanron. Confucius also maintains that a "sense of shame" is important for a Gentleman. "A Gentleman is ashamed of uttering words beyond his ability to act upon them (Analects, 14:29)".

Consistency between words and deeds: The above statement regarding sense of shame (Analects, 14:29) emphasizes the need for consistency between words and deeds of a Gentleman. Valluvar also makes an analogous statement in Thirukkural 819 when he states that "The association with those whose words and deeds do not match is a terrible thing even in one's dream." Both Confucius and Valluvar seem to agree on

the need for consistency between the words and deeds and failing to have such consistency is shameful behavior which should be avoided.

Justice and Righteousness: As seen from Thirukkural 115 and Thirukkural 118, Valluvar requires that a Sanron is always on the side of justice and does what is right irrespective of the consequences. The various references to Sanron in the Thirukkural show that a Sanron is not only on the side of justice, he always follows the path of righteousness and is duty bound to follow high moral and ethical standards. The following passages from the Analects indicate that Confucius also places great emphasis on justice as an essential quality for a Gentleman:

- A Gentleman in administering any public affair under the sun is without personal interest and without preconceived notions - righteousness is the basis for decisions. (Analects, 4:10)
- A Gentleman pursues righteousness, a common man, personal gain. (Analects, 4:16)

- A gentleman's intrinsic is righteousness; he acts with conduct, speaks with humbleness, and completes with trustworthiness - that is indeed a Gentleman. (Analects, 15:18)
- A gentleman does not recommend a person merely because of that person's eloquence, nor disregard a person's words merely because of that person's reputation (notoriety). (Analects, 15:23)
- A Gentleman values righteousness the highest (Analects, 17:23)

Not speaking ill of others: In Thirukkural 984, Valluvar says, "Penance consists in goodness that kills not, and perfection in the goodness that tells not others' faults." According to Confucius, "The Gentleman calls attention to the good points in others; he does not call attention to their defects. The small man does the reverse of this (Analects, 12: 16)." Here again, the agreement between Valluvar and Confucius is obvious.

Modesty in Behavior: Valluvar is a great proponent of self-control and modesty. He has reserved a whole chapter (Chapter 13) for self-control

where he advocates control of one's tongue (speech) so that one would not offend others. Other Thirukkural couplets in that chapter deal with control of one's temper, one's senses and this control is not out of weakness but out of the desire to portray a modest behavior towards all. In Thirukkural 985, Valluvar mentions, "The strength of men who would achieve things lies in their humility and that is the armor with which men of perfect goodness (Sanron) transform their enemies." In a similar manner, Confucius assigns importance to modesty in a Gentleman's code of conduct and it is reflected in the following statement:

The Gentleman is dignified, but never haughty; common people are haughty, but never

dignified. (Analects, 13:26)

Drinking: In the Chinese society of Confucius' period as well as in the Tamil society of Valluvar, consumption of alcoholic beverages was neither considered a sin nor as an unacceptable behavior. However, excessive

drinking was not condoned. In fact, Confucius has told his disciples that they should use their discretion with regard to the consumption of wine (Analects, 10:8b). Though he did not make any comments about the consumption of liquor by a Gentleman, one could expect that the same recommendation would apply equally to a Gentleman. As mentioned in a preceding section, Valluvar expects that a Sanron would abstain from liquor altogether.

Conclusion

Valluvar and Confucius agree that all are equal at birth. Saalbu and Jen seem to imply similar high standards of virtues and the collection of all good qualities needed in an ideal man of perfection. Valluvar's Sanron possesses 'saalbu' which includes love, sense of Shame, philanthropic munificence, gracious compassion and truthfulness. Confucius' Gentleman constantly works towards achieving 'Jen' which includes humanity, human-heartedness, benevolence and all other good qualities.

Neither poverty nor prosperity seems to distract a Sanron or a Gentleman from their pursuits. Humility, modesty, justice, righteousness, not harming others, exhibiting a sense of shame, consistency between words and deeds, and not speaking ill of others are similar virtues practiced by a Sanron and a Gentleman.

However, there are differences between Valluvar's Sanron and Confucius' Gentleman.

- Valluvar's Sanron is full of all the desired qualities (Saalbu). On the other hand, Confucius' Gentleman is one who constantly works towards the desired quality of Jen.
- Confucius' Gentleman is an ideal candidate for working in a king's administration and carrying out orders impartially and he is faithful to the king. Valluvar's Sanron does not seem to have any specific role in administration. He is generally respected by one and all and he can be in any walk of life.

- There are some specific aspects of a Sanron in the Thirukkural which do not have parallel counterparts in the Analects. Similarly, there are some specifics in the Analects about a Gentleman for which there are no equivalent statements in the Thirukkural.

In summary, Confucius and Valluvar may disagree on specifics; but they agree on many aspects pertaining to the essential qualities of a “perfect man.” Even though Confucius and Valluvar lived in different time periods, in different parts of the world, and in different cultures, there is a remarkable similarity in what they considered to be the qualities of a “perfect man.”



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Maraimalai Adigal, an icon of Tamil renaissance

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Maraimalai Adigal, an icon of Tamil renaissance

(15 July 1876 – 15 September 1950)

The task to write on Maraimalai Adigal will be an unwieldy and heavy job and that too in the columns of a journal it will consume many pages. But to put it short, he is a scholar in Tamil, English and Sanskrit, poet, philosopher, journalist, orator and master of many skills like Hypnotism, Siddha medicine, Dream analysis, Psychoanalysis, Personality development and many more.

When Tamil was not given its due place in Tamilnadu and Tamilians were suppressed by a miniscule minority it was Periyar E.V.R. and Maraimalai adigal who rose on the occasion to motivate Tamil people and Tamil intellectuals to break down the clutches forced on them in the name of religion and God.

While Maraimalai adigal hesitated to work with E.V.R. the necessity of the occasion impelled him to shun off the differences and his Podhunilai kazhagam became a parallel movement to the self-respect movement of Periyar.

Ilavalaganar, a student of Maraimalai Adigal wrote:

Saivism is not one iota different from the primary aim of the Self-respect movement. The Self-respect movement arose to dispel the illusion of Brahmanism from the Tamil people and infuse self-respect into them. Saivism also does the same. The Self-respect Movement detests the Aryan Brahmins. Saivism too doesn't like the Aryan Brahmins one bit... The Self-respect movement wishes to uplift the depressed classes. That is

also the basic idea of Saivism.... The Self-respect movement is against caste differences among the Tamil people. Saivism too emphasizes the same point... when there are so many commonalities, why should Saivism and Saivite apostles be deprecated and condemned [by the Self-respect movement].

Both Maraimalai Adigal and Periyar realized that their disagreement is harmful for their interest and worked towards a rapprochement. Maraimalai Adigal wrote a series on the Ramayana in Periyar's English weekly Revolt.

Maraimalai Adigal hailed as the father of Pure Tamil movement, insisted through his lectures and writings the need to remove Sanskrit and other loan words from alien languages and cautioned it will distort and divide Tamil into many other new hybrid languages.

Periyar's Dravidian movement stood as a solid support to Adigal's Pure Tamil movement. Both in speech and writing Pure Tamil flourished and spread throughout the Tamil world. As it is a known fact, there is no need to elaborate it here.

Here in this issue we have reprinted some pages of a book titled "Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets" and this portion describes the vision of Thiruvalluvar to build a new world without any differences.

Thirukkural, a scripture for the entire humankind

Human nature is the same everywhere and the ills, to which the human and animal flesh is an heir, are also the same everywhere. While the inward nature of human life is thus the same, the outward nature and individual peculiarities of each and every man or of each and every class to which he belongs, differ in infinite degrees. Still all these

differences are mostly brought about on the surface, by diversity of country, climate, colour, food, although clothing, language, customs, habits and so on, it cannot be doubted that these affect the mental condition of the people also to a considerable extent. spite of all these differences, man has a power of intellect and will, which, if rightly exercised, will enable him to override them and make his cause common with that of all others of his kind. He can perceive that these external causes are perishable and are therefore powerless to touch the intrinsic and imperishable nature of intelligent beings. It is by recognizing this unity in the diversity of mankind, which this ancient Tamil poet exclaimed: 'All places are ours, all are our kith and kin.'" As pointed out earlier, the Aryan intellectualists formulated a classification of mankind on an imaginary basis of Caste, deriving the four Castes from different parts of Brahma's body, viz, the Brahmin from Brahma's head, the king or Kshatriya from his shoulders, the merchant or Vaisya from his thighs and the Sudra from his feet. Pride of place was given to the Brahmin in the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world and the next. but the Aryan attempt to dominate others, especially the Tamils, by this classification, failed. In the history of ancient civilization, we find the Hebrews attempting likewise to isolate the tribe of Israel as the elect of God, while Muhammedanism too treated people of an alien faith as infidels not being the children of God. The Buddhist conception of the equality of all men falls flat in view of their disbelief in the Godhead; for there cannot be any co-ownership or co-relationship when the belief in a common father is lacking. Possession and the effort for possession would but redound to the credit of each individual, with no interaction between individuals, or with no collective attempt to derive advantages from mutual aid. The conception of mankind by the Jains too suffers from the same disadvantage as that of the Buddhist conception.

But the Tamilian conception of mankind is totally different. The Tamil bards and intellectualists of the time of Kaniyan Pungunranar and those preceding his age considered that all men, whatever their rank or station in life, were alike and were the children of one Even the true eternal God, the triple-eyed Sivan. That animal kingdom was included in the conception. this fact coupled with the fundamental right of all and sundry persons to acquire the advantages of learning, &c was emphasised by them is evident from the following couplets of Thiruvalluvar who followed in the footsteps of the Masters:

(972) "All human beings are alike, by reason of birth, but unlike by reason of occupation"

(973) "Though seated aloft, they cannot be considered great, who by non-accomplishment of difficult and delicate tasks are small; whereas those are really great (owing to their ability) who would not become small because they are seated in a lower position".

(410) "As men are unlike the beasts, so are the learned unlike the unlearned".

(393) "The learned will be spoken of as possessing eyes, while the illiterate as having only two sores in their sockets".

(2) "What benefit do they derive from learning who worship not the good feet of Him who possesses pure wisdom".

(259) "Not to kill an animal and eat the flesh thereof is better than the performance of a thousand sacrifices".

(356) "They who in this birth have learnt to know the true Being enter the road which returns not to this world".

(346) "He who destroys the pride which says I and Mine' will enter the world which is difficult even for the gods to obtain".

Since all men are on a common platform by reason of their birth, they are raised or lowered according to the position they acquire in the sphere of intellectual and moral ideas and actions. It is only knowledge and wisdom that can raise a man above other men and if after acquiring them he does not make use of them to `search for God and worship him, his knowledge is vain. And he alone who conquers self and pride finds the feet of God.

Although all men are considered the children of God, yet they become good or bad according as they do what is right or wrong. When the faculty of thinking is not properly exercised, when the organs of sense and movement are not duly employed, they become aberrant, abnormal and erratic or they become atrophied and dead. This law of modern Biological science was discovered and stated 2000 years ago by the poet Kaniyan Pungunranar. And Thiruvalluvar also who belongs to the same age says: "A man's deed is the touchstone of his greatness and littleness". Kural 505. And so pain of mind and body is caused by man's own thoughts and deeds and rarely by others. If he could keep his mind calm under all circumstances, little would he be affected by joy or grief, distress or disease. The poet Kaniyan Pungunranar further says: "Dying is not new; nor living gave us joy". Here too it is plain that one's thought it is that plays its part in bringing into his or her mind either grief or joy.

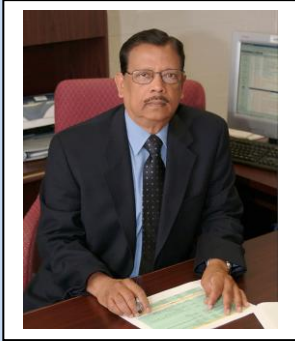
The death of a relative or friend pains us more than the death of a stranger simply owing to the tie of relationship or attachment. A little thinking will reveal the fact that death is universal and its occurrence therefore it is vain to bemoan. Similarly happiness and good fortune should not affect a man, as such happiness and fortune may disappear under altered circumstances. Nor should a man worry himself or feel grieved at his poverty if he realizes that poverty also is in the nature of things in this world and is his portion. The sum of actions in past conditions in the present existence and accounts for man's greatness or littleness.

Hence there need be neither praise for the Great nor scorn for the Lowest. Occasions may sometimes arise to render praise to the Great, but under no circumstances should the low be scorned.

[Book: Ancient and Modern Tamil Poets-Chapter: Ancient Poets' Mind pp;42-47]

Valluvar's concept of an ideal country

Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran



Introduction

The words “country” and “nation” are often used interchangeably. But they mean different things. A country is a self-governing political entity that has its own territory with internationally recognized borders. As of 2017, 193 countries were members of the United Nations Organization. Nation refers to a group of people sharing a common culture, language, and history. For example, although the Kurdish people live in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, they consider themselves members of the Kurdish nation. In chapter 74 of his book, Valluvar refers to a political entity ruled by a king. So, all references in Chapter 74 should be considered references to a country rather than a nation.

In the Chapter on Country, Valluvar mentions that a country should be free of starvation, epidemics, harassment from enemies, warring factions, internal strife, and murderous gangsters. Also, the country should not experience major devastation. Even when such devastation occur and the financial burden befalls, the country should be resilient enough to withstand such exigencies and bounce back to normalcy. He then discusses the positive features that a country should possess. Finally, he stresses the importance of good leadership for a country to prosper.

Valluvar's foresight is genuinely remarkable. Even in the 21st century, many countries are plagued with the same problems mentioned by Valluvar. They struggle to provide satisfactory healthcare for their citizens, are unable to maintain law and order, and are incapable of providing their citizens safety, security, peace, prosperity, and happiness. There are very few countries that meet all of Valluvar's criteria to be considered an ideal country. Valluvar's kural couplets from the chapter on Country are presented in the following paragraphs, and his ideas are compared against the current conditions in many countries of the world.

The adverse conditions that should not be present in a country:

An ideal country is one where people are free from starvation and epidemics, and enemies do not harass the country. (kural – 734)

Starvation, epidemics, frequent conflicts, and wars are also common in Africa and some Asian countries. Compared to other countries, Canada and the USA seem to meet the ideals mentioned in the above kural. Except during the Great Depression, famine and starvation have not affected the USA. Canada has not been subject to significant famines or starvation crises. Due to general awareness of hygiene and the government's initiatives for disease control, major epidemics have been rare in the USA and Canada. Of course, the USA has been involved in many conflicts and wars during its history. But there has been no country powerful enough to harass the USA. In most cases, it has been the USA that was the aggressor. However, Canada has never initiated a war. Its involvement in wars has been only in support of the USA, UK, or United Nations Organization peacekeeping efforts. For several decades, Canada has not been harassed by any enemies.

An ideal nation does not have warring factions, destructive internal strife, and murderous gangsters. (kural – 735)

Although the USA was found to meet the criteria in kural 734, it certainly falls short with respect to the criteria in kural 735. On-going racial disputes, drug-related gangs, and murders are routine occurrences in major cities of the USA. Each year, countries are ranked on the Global Peace Index (GPI), a composite measure of peacefulness according to the levels of safety and security in their society, involvement in conflict at home and abroad, and their degree of militarization. Based on the 2017 GPI, the most peaceful country in the world is Iceland, and New Zealand is considered the second most peaceful country. Since 2008, Iceland has been undisputed and number one ranked most peaceful country in the world. It ranks at the top in just about every measure on the GPI, including being number one in social safety, security, and militarization.

Resilience and resurgence in case of devastation:

It is the best among countries that know no devastation; even if any devastation should occur, its prosperity does not decline. (Kural – 736)

It is beyond the control of a country to prevent natural disasters. Valluvar says that even if devastation should occur, a country should be able to recover from it and continue to prosper. A notable example in this context is Japan. During the second world war, Japan suffered major setbacks, including the USA's nuclear bombing resulting in enormous loss of life and property. The country's infrastructure was completely destroyed. But Japan bounced back and regained its prosperity. This was due to the industry, innovation, and perseverance of the Japanese people.

An ideal country bears every burden that befalls yet pays in full all the taxes owed to the government. (kural – 733)

The Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters publishes an Annual Disaster Review to provide valuable information on the occurrence of natural disasters and their impacts on society. According to their report issued in 2014, “China, the United States, the Philippines, Indonesia, and India are the five countries most frequently hit by natural disasters. For years, these same countries have regularly featured at the top of this annual list.” Japan should also be included in this list. Japan has experienced more than 60 earthquakes of magnitude 6.0 or higher on the Richter scale in the past 500 years. Yet, the people in these countries have paid their taxes regularly, and there has been no revolt against taxes. So, several countries pass the test proposed by Valluvar in kural 733.

Features of an Ideal Country

An ideal country is one that has an unfailing yield, competent citizenry, and discerning people with wealth. (kural – 731)

Unfailing yield implies that the soil is fertile, there is sufficient and timely rain, and those engaged in cultivation are meticulous in carrying out their duties. If the yield is unfailing, then there will be adequate food which is a basic necessity for the country's citizens. During the days of Valluvar, agriculture was the primary occupation in the world. But in the context of modern times, “unfailing yield” can be expanded to include the uninterrupted supply of all goods and services needed for the citizens of the country. The competent citizenry would consist of capable people with intelligence, innovation, and enthusiasm to work hard to produce various products and offer services required for the country's people. This interpretation allows the inclusion of labor as well as management in the category of the competent citizenry. Discerning people with ample wealth can afford to provide the necessary capital essential for the production of goods.

In his commentary on Thirukkural, Dr. S. M. Diaz suggests that this kural lends itself to an interpretation consistent with later-day economists like Adam Smith (1723 – 1790) and Alfred Marshal (1842 – 1924). Adam Smith's magnum opus, "The Wealth of Nations," is considered the first modern work on economics. Alfred Marshal's Principles of Economics was the dominant economic textbook in England for many years. Adam Smith and Alfred Marshal are considered the pioneers in the field of economics. Adam Smith mentions land, labor, and capital as the three prime factors of production.

Subsequently, Alfred Marshal added organization as the fourth factor of production. If Valluvar's mention of the competent citizenry can be interpreted to include labor and management, then it is consistent with Alfred Marshal's view that land, labor, capital, and organization are necessary factors for the efficient production of goods. Based on this revised interpretation, the above kural can be restated as follows: Productive land, competent labor, organization, and ample wealth constitute a prosperous land.

A land admired for its vast wealth, free from calamities, and yielding in abundance is the ideal country. (kural – 732)

The one country that is admired for its vast wealth and is the envy of the rest of the world is the United States of America. The USA is considered the land of opportunity. Over the past two centuries, millions of people from other countries have migrated legally and settled in the USA. Every day, thousands of people sneak illegally into the USA, hoping for a better life. However, the USA has not been free from calamities. It may suffer from earthquakes, torrential rain and tornadoes, heavy snowfall, forest fire, and other natural disasters. But the people's resilience, the nation's abundant wealth, and the government's emergency management policies and practices help to overcome these calamities. The vast size of the country and the fertility of the soil combined with

the industry and enterprising nature of the people have contributed to the abundance in the USA and helped her to gain the admiration of other countries.

Surface water, underground water, useful mountains, rivers, and strong fortifications are five essential parts of a country. (kural – 737)

According to the World Factbook (2015), Brazil, Russia, the USA, and Canada are the top four countries with plenty of freshwater resources. These countries are also blessed with useful mountains and rivers. Mountains, rivers, and forests can serve as natural fortification for a country. The ocean serves as the natural boundary and fortification for Australia and other island countries. For other countries, the sea may be part of their boundary. For some countries, mountains and rivers form the border. However strong the fortification is, people from neighboring countries and the enemies may find innovative ways to cross those barriers. In modern warfare, aerial attack plays a significant role, and the traditional land and sea-based fortifications will not be adequate. However, ultimately war is won as a result of ground battle. Therefore, Valluvar is right in emphasizing the importance of land-based fortifications.

Five ornaments of a country are the health of the citizens, the wealth of the country, rich harvests, people's happiness, and people's safety. (kural – 738)

The five items that are mentioned in the previous kural (kural -737) are essential features of a country. But the five items mentioned in the above kural (kural – 738) - health of the citizens, the wealth of the country, rich harvests, people's happiness, and safety add value to the country and make it superior to other countries. These are ideals that most countries strive to accomplish. Most third-world countries are not able to achieve these ideals. Even a wealthy country like the USA cannot guarantee affordable

healthcare for its citizens. Because of the proliferation of drugs, violence and hate crimes, terrorist attacks, the safety and happiness of US citizens are often at risk.

The United Nations' Human Development Report 2016 ranks where people live long, healthy lives. In other words, the countries that are best to live. The UN looked at nearly 200 countries across many categories, including life expectancy, education, gender equality, and financial wealth. The report concludes that several pitfalls work against human progress: discrimination, intolerance, and social norms that target vulnerable groups like women and racial minorities who face prejudice in a number of areas, including employment, education, and property rights. According to the Human Development Report (2016), the top eleven countries that scored high are Norway, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Singapore, The Netherlands, Ireland, Iceland, Canada, and the USA.

A place where prosperity comes effortlessly deserves to be called a country, not where prosperity entails hard labor. (kural – 739)

This kural sets up a very high standard. As seen from the above-cited UN Report, even in developed countries, life is not easy, and individuals do not achieve prosperity without hard work. Because of the existing prejudices, gender, and racial inequalities, discrimination, inefficiencies of the governments, and corruption among politicians, the life of an average citizen is difficult, and achieving prosperity is not easy. However, in developed countries like the USA, opportunities are more for achieving prosperity than in underdeveloped countries. Individuals who take advantage of the opportunities and work hard prosper. Effortless prosperity for everyone is perhaps the ideal and not a reality in most countries in modern times. The only exceptions are some of the countries

in the middle east whose prosperity is solely based on the enormous oil and natural gas reserves. For example, Qatar's average per capita income is more than \$100,000.

Importance of good governance

Even if a country has all the blessings, it is worth nothing if it lacks a good ruler.

(kural – 740)

The outstanding examples to validate this kural are North Korea and Venezuela. In the case of North Korea, three generations of dictators have been totally corrupt, and they have impoverished their country with callous indifference to its citizens. The land and the people of North Korea are not much different than their southern neighbor, South Korea. While South Korea has significantly improved its economy with significant industrial development and its people are prosperous, North Korea has failed to do so. Millions of people are starving and dying of malnutrition each year, while the dictator is proud to build intercontinental ballistic missiles and strengthen the armed forces. The primary reason for the people's misery is the attitude and actions of the country's leader. Venezuela is a fertile country and has the world's largest oil reserve. The corrupt leadership and the failed socialistic ideologies of Hugo Chavez and his successor Nicolas Maduro are responsible for the abject poverty and anarchy in that country.

Conclusion

In the Chapter on Country, Valluvar mentions several unfavorable conditions which should not be present in an ideal country. An ideal country is one that is free of famines, starvations, epidemics, wars, internal strife, and warring factions. On the positive side, the country should be fertile with ample water, seasonal rain, unfailing yield, wealthy people with undiminishing wealth, strong fortifications, effortless prosperity, and responsible government working towards the welfare and happiness of its citizens. There is increasing violence, poverty, terrorism, crime, inefficient governments, drugs,

immorality, and decadence. The best thing we can do is to hope that someday things will be better.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

Man, never is, but always to be blessed:

The soul, uneasy and confined from home,

Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

– Alexander Pope, An Essay on Man



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Valluvar Kottam at Chennai and Valluvar statue at Kumari:

**Two greatest tributes to the Illustrious poet-philosopher Thiruvalluvar by
Kalaigarnar Mu.Karunanidhi**

Valluvar Kottam is located at the intersection of the Kodambakkam High road and the Village road in Nungambakkam neighborhood of Chennai. The monument now stands at what was once the deepest point of a local lake called the Nungambakkam lake.

History

The construction of the Valluvar Kottam was conceived and executed by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M. Karunanidhi during the 1970s. It was designed by South Indian traditional architect V. Ganapati Sthapati, who is also the architect of the Thiruvalluvar Statue at Kanyakumari. It was inaugurated in April 1976 by the then President of India Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed.

The monument

The monument consists of a decorative arch, an auditorium that can accommodate around 3,500 people, and the Kural Manimandapam, where all the 1,330 couplets from all 133 chapters of the Kural literature are inscribed on bas-relief. The hallmark of the monument is the 39-meter-high (128 feet) stone car, a replica of the famed temple chariot of Thiruvavur. The chariot is made of around 3000 blocks of granite stone from Tiruvannamalai and weighs 2,700 tonnes. The largest of these stones weigh as much as 40 tonnes. The four giant-sized wheels of the chariot measure 11 feet in diameter and 2 feet in thickness. A life-size statue of Valluvar has

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been installed in the chariot.[3] The chariot is adorned with the famed Kalamkari drawings. The bottom portion of the chariot features bas relief sculptures depicting all the 133 chapters of the Kural text. The central auditorium measures 220 feet by 100 feet and is said to be Asia's largest at the time of its construction. The roof of the monument has a terraced garden with two large pools.

The Thiruvalluvar Statue at Kumari

The Thiruvalluvar Statue, or the Valluvar Statue, is a 41-metre-tall (133 ft) stone sculpture of the Tamil poet and philosopher Valluvar, author of the Tirukkural, an ancient Tamil work on Dharma and morality. It is located atop a small island near the town of Kanyakumari on the southernmost point of the Indian peninsula on the Coromandel Coast, where two seas (the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea) and an ocean (the Indian Ocean) meet. The statue was sculpted by the Indian sculptor V. Ganapati Sthapati, who also created the Iraivan Temple, and was unveiled on the millennium day of 1 January 2000 by the then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi. It is currently the 25th tallest statue in India.

The statue was unveiled on the millennium day of 1 January 2000. The statue was inaugurated on 1st January 2000 by Dr. M. Karunanidhi, the then chief minister of Tamil Nadu. Besides Indian political leaders and celebrities, foreign delegates including those from Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, participated in the opening ceremony. Several Tamil teachers from the state of Tamil Nadu took out a rally from Kottaram to Kanyakumari carrying Thirukkural placards to mark the ceremony. More than fifty thousand people gathered for the event. The chief minister, after unveiling the statue, called it a "beacon of light to guide human life for all time to come."

The combined height of the statue and pedestal is 133 feet (41 meters), denoting the 133 chapters of the Thirukkural. This includes 95 feet (29 meters) sculpture of Valluvar standing upon a 38 feet (12 meters) pedestal that represents the 38 chapters of Virtue, the first of the three books of the Kural text. The statue itself represents the second and third books of the Kural text, namely, Wealth and Love. The whole design signifies that wealth and love be earned and enjoyed on the foundation of solid virtue. The right hand of the statue with three fingers pointing skywards signifies the three cantos of the Kural text, namely, Aram, Porul, and Inbam (Virtue, Wealth, and Love, respectively), combined. The head of the statue stands at a height of 61 metres (200 ft) above the sea level.

The statue, with its slight bend around the waist is reminiscent [citation needed] of a dancing pose of the Hindu deities like Nataraja. The statue weighs 7,000 tons (6,900 long tons; 7,700 short tons).

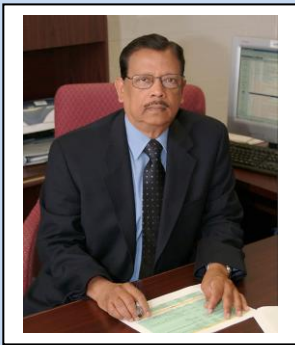
The monument is regarded as a cultural fusion because of its juxtaposition beside the Vivekananda Rock Memorial. Built-in conformation with traditional Indian architecture, the statue has provision to provide a hollow portion inside from toe to scalp. Visitors, however, will not be allowed to scale, but instead be permitted to climb up to the foot of the statue at a height of 12 meters (38 ft).

These two monuments will stand for ever as Kalaignar's expression of regard and respect for Thiruvalluvar and for thousands and thousands of years, will inspire the Tamil people to read and revere Thiruvalluvar.

A Note to our readers:

**Due to the shifting of our office premises there was no issue
on the previous month dated July 17.**

Thiruvalluvar on Management



Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran

Introduction

The colossal pyramids of Egypt were built about 5,000 years ago. The oldest operational dam in the world, Lake Homs Dam, located in Syria, was constructed during the 14th century BC. Parts of the Great Wall of China were completed during the 7th century BC. During the second half of the 5th century BC, the Parthenon and other famous buildings of Greece were built. The Kallanai Dam (also known as Grand Anicut), situated on the Kaveri River in Tamil Nadu, India, was built by Karikal Chozhan of the Chozha dynasty in the 2nd century AD and it is the fourth oldest dam in the world. These are some examples of projects conceived by the kings and completed with the help of many people. Such large-scale construction projects were not peculiar to the ancient days. Similar projects were carried out during the Middle Ages also. The

massive castles, beautiful churches, stunning synagogues of Europe, the architecturally elegant temples of India, and the impressive mosques in many countries are all examples of major construction projects completed by the group efforts of thousands of people during the first and second millennium of the Christian era. It is inconceivable that monumental structures like these could have been built without proper leadership and an organizational structure to support the leader's vision. Invariably, the leadership would have come from the kings. The kings might have entrusted the responsibility for the construction to one of their ministers. There could have been other supervisory personnel, and the actual work would have been done by laborers and, in some cases, by slaves. The management guru Peter Drucker says, "Management is about human beings. Its task is to make people capable of joint performance." Based on this simple definition, it appears that management practices have been there for many centuries.

Thiruvalluvar, also known as Valluvar, was an outstanding philosopher who lived about 2,000 years ago in the south-eastern state of India called Tamil Nadu. He is the author of the book, Thirukkural, also known as the Kural. The Kural consists of 1330 couplets dealing with the three major aspects of life, virtue, wealth, and love. In the section on wealth, he discusses several aspects of management and administration.

Modern management scholars differ in their classifications of management functions. The most widely accepted functions of management, as given by Koontz and O'Donnel in their book, "Principles of Management: An analysis of Managerial Functions," are as follows: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, and Controlling. In the following sections, we will consider Valluvar's ideas about these management functions.

Planning

Importance of Planning: Planning is an essential function of management. According to Koontz and O'Donnel, "Planning is deciding in advance - what to do, when to do and how to do. It bridges the gap between where we are and where we want to be." Planning deals with deciding on a future course of action for achieving the pre-

determined goals. Planning is critical to ensure that the resources are properly utilized. Throughout history, there are many examples of business enterprises and military ventures ending in failures due to a lack of proper planning. In the United States, more than 500,000 small businesses are started each year. According to the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy, only about 50% of these businesses survive their fifth anniversary, and only one-third celebrate their 10th anniversary. It is said that the lack of planning is the primary cause of the failure of small businesses. Valluvar realizes the importance of planning. He states, "Action should follow analytic decision resulting from deep deliberations. Venturing into action without due deliberation is disgraceful (couplet – 467)." He warns that anyone who ventures into a project without a detailed plan is bound to fail.

The Planning Process: Valluvar has several couplets in which he offers valuable guidelines as to how the planning process should be carried out. He believes that the leader or the king should consult with knowledgeable people and decide the course of action. Although the king or the leader is ultimately responsible for the outcome of his actions, if he consults with experts, he will benefit from their knowledge and wisdom. In addition to emphasizing the importance of planning and discussing the planning process itself, Valluvar outlines the following five major factors that should be considered in the planning process: 1) resources at hand, 2) equipment that is needed, 3) appropriate time for the action, 4) nature of the project and, 5) appropriate place for the project. Suppose a king had to launch a war with an enemy. In that case, he should certainly consider his manpower, the weapons, and other resources available to him, the appropriate time to attack the enemy, the actual mode of attack, and the proper place to attack the enemy.

Similarly, in the case of a business venture, the entrepreneur should consider his financial and human resources, the type of equipment needed, the opportune time for launching the venture, details of his product, and the proper location to build his plant

and the distribution facilities for marketing the product. The same five elements are essential in planning any venture, whether a military mission, starting a business, or building a manufacturing plant. The relative importance of these five elements may vary. Nonetheless, they are all important considerations for developing a proper plan. The actual couplet discussing these five elements is as follows:

Consider these five factors: resources, means, time, task, and the place of action, and then proceed with the execution. (Couplet – 675)

Organizing

The next step after the planning phase is organizing. Organizing is the process of bringing together physical, financial, and human resources and developing a productive relationship among them to achieve the organizational goal. In the organizing phase of a project, various tasks are identified, grouped, and prioritized in the right order.

Prioritization of Tasks: There will be several tasks in any project of considerable complexity. These tasks may vary in their relative importance. Valluvar believes that the project will be unsuccessful if the essential tasks are not accomplished. He also adds that the project will fail if the irrelevant, unnecessary, and unimportant tasks are completed.

The project will be ruined if you do things that ought not to be done or you do not do things that ought to be done. (Couplet – 466)

The tasks may be dependent on each other. To succeed in a project, during the organizing phase, all the tasks relevant to the project must be carefully analyzed and prioritized based on their dependency, importance, and urgency. These days, project planners use sophisticated software to analyze the task dependencies and the resources required to complete the tasks and schedule the tasks in the right order based on their importance, dependencies, and urgency. Valluvar expresses the same idea in the following couplet:

Things that may be done at leisure can be implemented slowly and deliberately. But things requiring immediate attention should not be delayed at all. (Couplet – 672)

It is interesting to note that Valluvar's idea is very similar to what Stephen Covey, the American author, refers to as "Habit three – Put first things first" in his famous book, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

Staffing

According to Peter Drucker, "The fundamental task of management is to make people capable of joint performance through common goals, common values, the right structure, training, and development they need to perform and respond to changes." In an organization, it is the people who carry out the various jobs needed for its functioning. They are the most important resource of the organization. They supply the talent, skills, knowledge, and experience to achieve the organizational goals and objectives. Hence, the staffing function of management is an important function concerned with acquiring, developing, employing, and retaining people so that the right people are available for the right positions and at the right time in the organization. Valluvar addresses the recruitment aspect of the staffing function in detail.

Selecting someone for a position without testing him will result in endless troubles for years to come. (Couplet – 508)

The choice of the right executive should be based on how he reacts to the four-fold tests concerning virtue, wealth, love, and fear of death. (Couplet – 501)

In addition to the above-mentioned testing criteria, Valluvar adds a few more to the list. He says that only those with good family backgrounds, free from obvious faults and concerned about their status in society, should be hired (Couplet – 502). Further, he insists on hiring only those who will be loyal to the organization, who are knowledgeable, capable of clear thinking, and not very greedy (Couplet – 513). These are very practical guidelines.

Some people may meet all the criteria mentioned so far. But some of them may not be able to contribute to an organization's financial growth. Whether it is a nation or an organization, people with the ability to add to the wealth of the nation or to an

organization are considered an asset. This is evident from the fact that the CEOs of most large corporations come from the ranks of marketing, finance, and business development backgrounds with expertise in growing the company's financial position.

Employ the one who can expand the sources of revenue, increase wealth, analyze problems, and resolve them. (Couplet – 512)

In addition to suggesting who should be hired, Valluvar also mentions the type of people who should not be hired. He does not favor hiring people with no friends and relatives because such people will not be concerned if their personal reputation is sullied (Kural – 506). Also, people should be hired only based on their merit and expertise and not on other considerations such as personal likes and favoritism (Couplet – 515).

It is interesting to note that Valluvar has thought extensively about these human resource issues. His ideas about the hiring process are still valid. When a corporation hires an executive, it is customary to check his academic and professional background and past performance. Many corporations conduct personality tests like the Briggs-Myers test and other psychological evaluations to determine a candidate's suitability for high-level positions.

Directing

Directing is a process in which the managers delegate, instruct, guide, motivate and supervise the workers' performance to achieve the organizational goals.

Valluvar on delegation: Valluvar believes that once a person has been selected after being tested, he should be assigned appropriate duties and made to own all the responsibilities for that job (Couplet – 509). More importantly, he should also have the necessary authority to do the job. So, the delegation of authority and responsibility should go together (Couplet – 518). Once the individual is empowered to act, he should be left alone. He should not be micromanaged (Couplet – 517). Micromanaging an employee destroys his motivation and self-confidence. Many managers tend to micromanage and destroy their employees' morale and productivity.

It is said that Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple, was an example of a micromanager extraordinaire who was reformed into a successful executive. His first attempt at Apple was not very successful. When he was let go from Apple, he started the company NeXT Computer. At NeXT, Steve Jobs micromanaged just about everything. The failure of NeXT is attributed to Steve Job's management style. When he started Pixar company, he did not make the mistake of micromanaging. He gave complete authority and responsibility to his managers. Pixar was very successful. He continued the same style of management when he returned to Apple and turned it into one of the world's most valuable companies. Valluvar is in favor of delegation and avoiding micromanaging.

Valluvar on Supervision and Performance Evaluation: Valluvar is a true pragmatist. He says that despite all the tests, even a man of good family background and education may prove to be incompetent upon close examination (Couplet – 503). Sometimes, a candidate may do well in all the tests. But, in actual work, his performance could be less than satisfactory (Couplet – 514). Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses, and the employer has to consider both and take the one that outweighs the other (Couplet 504). Therefore, it is necessary to routinely supervise the employees, evaluate their performance and reward them commensurate with their performance (Couplet – 528).

Controlling

Controlling is one of the managerial functions like planning, organizing, staffing, and directing. It consists of verifying whether everything occurs according to the plans adopted, instructions issued, and established principles. Controlling ensures that there is effective and efficient utilization of organizational resources to achieve the planned goals. Controlling implies measuring the deviation of actual performance from the standard performance, discovering the causes of such deviations, and taking corrective actions. According to modern concepts, control is a foreseeing action, whereas the earlier concept of control was used only when errors were detected. These days, management information systems provide the information needed for the leader/manager to compare the progress against the plan.

Valluvar's primary focus is the king and how he should control his administration. During his days, the method of information gathering was through intelligence services (spies). His approach is still valid and being practiced by the governments. Countries routinely employ spies to gather information about what is happening in their countries and their enemies' activities. Valluvar believes that a king must know immediately everything that always happens to everybody (Couplet – 582). However, present-day managers do not employ spies to gather information about the progress of the projects. They use information systems, monitor their staff, and use their intelligence to gather information needed to control their projects.

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THE REVEREND PROFESSOR XAVIER S. THANINAYAGAM

---Professor C J Eliezer

The city of Madurai in South India has an ancient history. From the days BC it has been a centre of Tamil learning. It was the venue for what scholars call the "Third Sangam". If one visits Madurai today, one can see the statues of certain modern scholars of Tamil. One such statue is that of Jaffna's foremost Tamil scholar Father Xavier S. ThaniNayagam. The existence of that statue indicates the esteem, honor and acclaim accorded to him by scholars of Tamil from all over the world.

Fr. Thani Nayagam's natural flair for languages developed during his years of training as a monk in Rome. He could read and speak fluently about a dozen languages, including French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese; at Annamalai University he specialized in Tamil; at London, he obtained a PhD in Education.

With this broad background of training and influence he was able to bring a modern outlook to problems of research into Tamil language, literature and culture. He used modern techniques of linguistic research in an area of study where the long tradition had been the uncritical acceptance of points of view of distinguished predecessors. He inaugurated the International Journal called "Tamil Culture", where scholars from different parts of the world reported their research findings.

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As worldwide interest in Tamil studies grew he raised with some of the leading scholars the possibility of an International Association of Tamil Research (IATR). The idea received warm support and the association was inaugurated. Professor Filliozat of Paris was President, and the Vice-Presidents were Professors Burrow of Oxford, Emeneau of USA, Kuiper of Hague, Meenakshisundaram of Madurai and M.Varatharajan of Madras, all giants in the field of Tamil studies. Fr. Thani Nayagam accepted the position of Secretary General. The first in the series of Conferences was held in 1966 in KualaLampur. The university and the Government of Malaysia gave great support, Tamil being one of the four official languages of Malaysia. Fr. Thani Nayagam did the hard work of organising the conference; he was assisted by many persons including Prof S Arasaratnam, Mrs Loga Sivasubramaniam, My wife and my-self - mentioning those who are in Australia today. The conference was opened by the Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, and proved an enormous success, with well known scholars from about twenty five countries participating.

I first came to know the Father about forty years ago in the University of Ceylon which he joined as a lecturer in education. Later on he became the Professor in Indian Studies in the University Malaya in Kuala Lumpur where I was Professor of Mathematics. Those years brought us together a good deal and we became good friends. It was further cemented by rounds of golf at the Royal Selangor Golf Club and the numerous dinners we hosted to meet the world scholars.

I end this short tribute with his most telling quote:

"If Latin is the Language of Law and of Medicine

French the Language of the Diplomacy

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E-Zine fortnightly

Not for

Sale

German the Language of Science

And English the Language of Commerce

Then Tamil is the Language of Bhakti

The devotion to the sacred and the holy."

Prof C.J.Eliezer who retired from La Trobe University (Melbourne) adorned the chair of Mathematics in Colombo and Kuala Lumpur. A distinguished son of Jaffna, Prof. Eliezer takes active interest in the problems of Tamils. He has been honoured by the Federal Government with the Order of Australia.

Courtesy: Tamil Chudar (Feb 1997) - Sydney



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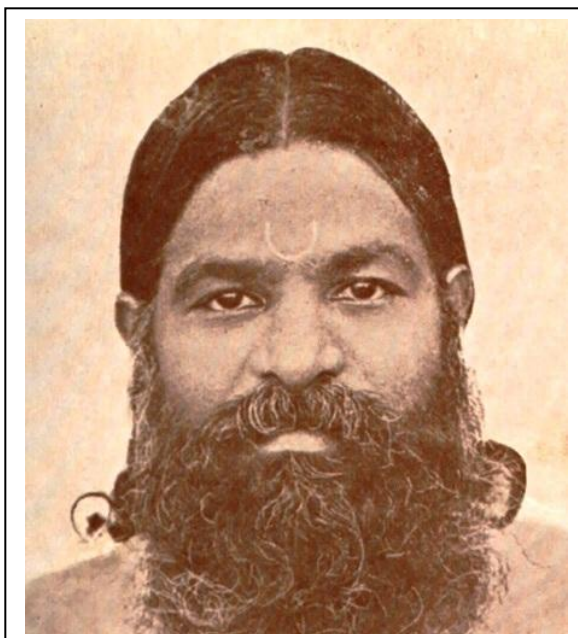
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V.V.S.Aiyar ((2 April 1881 – 3 June 1925)

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Thirukkural-Part 3: kamaththuppal-

CHAPTER 131

Translated by V.V.S.Aiyar

BOUDERIE* (Sulks.)

The Maid to the Mistress

1301. Embrace him not, my dear, but feign to be angry: let us just see a fun how he is nettled over it.

1302. Bouderie is the salt of love: to lengthen it unduly, however, is like adding too much of salt to food.

The Wife is in a fit of Jealousy and addresses the Husband

1303. It is like wounding one anew who is already wounded, if thou come away without embracing her whom thou hast left in a pet.

1304. To come away without conciliating her who is frowning in a pet is like cutting off the roots from under the starving plant.

The Husband within himself

1305. The Bouderie of the beloved hath an attraction even for men who are spotlessly pure.

1306. If there were no frowns or pets on the part of the beloved, love would miss

its fruits and its half-grown.

1307. There is a pain that belongeth unto bouderie : for one asketh oneself whether reconciliation is near or yet a far way off.

The Husband to himself but in the hearing of the Wife

1308. Of what avail is my grieving when there is no loving one nigh to see how much I suffer?

1309. Water is pleasant only in shady groves: and pettishness hath a charm only in one who loveth ardently.

1310. If my heart still yearneth for her who sooth eth me not, it is due to nothing but a foolish longing.

VVS Aiyar was born on April 2, 1881, in Varahaneri village in Tiruchi. He completed his graduation with B.A in History, Politics and Latin from St. Joseph's College. He studied Law and passed the Pleader examination from the University of Madras in the year 1902. Later he practised as a Junior Lawyer or Pleader in the District courts of Tiruchi. In 1906, he went to Rangoon, and practised as a junior in the Chambers of an English Barrister. From Rangoon, he left for London in 1907, enrolled in Lincoln's Inn with a view to becoming a Barrister at Law.

In 1910, Aiyar resigned his membership of Lincoln's Inn. A warrant was issued by the British for his arrest and Aiyar escaped to Paris. But he had no wish to remain in Paris as a political exile. From there, Aiyar sailed to Pondicherry. En route, from Rome, he sent a copy of Dante's Divine Comedy by post to Mandayam Srinivasachari in Pondicherry. On arrival, Aiyar, disguised as a bearded Muslim, landed up in Srinivasachari's house and asked if he had received a copy of the Divine Comedy. The name of the book

was the password for identity! Thus, he managed to return to India, albeit to French Pondicherry, and there he met Subramaniya Bharathi and Aurobindo. He remained in Pondicherry for ten years till the end of the First World War

In Pondicherry, Aiyar was involved in the plot to assassinate Ashe, the Collector of Tirunelveli. Vanchinathan who assassinated General Ashe was his disciple and it was Aiyar who trained him in the use of pistol.

It is said that a busy man finds time for everything. His love of literature being so intense, in the midst of freedom struggle and with the Damocles sword of arrest threatening him every moment during his exile in Pondicherry, he translated Thirukkural into English. Apart from that, he wrote hundreds of short stories. He has also translated one of the short stories composed by Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali into Tamil, titled Kapulivala.

And it was in prison that VVS Aiyar wrote his magnum opus – a study of Kamban's Ramayana. He wanted, as was his personal trait, to infuse a sense of courage and heroism in people and towards this end he wrote a number of biographies of freedom fighters and warriors. A biography of Garibaldi, the Italian patriot, was written by him as a serial in 'India'. He did a biography of Guru Govind Singh also.

Aiyar died in 1925 by drowning at the Papanasam falls, while trying to save his daughter Subhadra who was struggling in the water.

His translation of Thirukkural in English is a treasure left by him for us to cherish.

ETHICS IN THIRUKKURAL (Valluvar's Political Philosophy)

K.Ganeshan M.A.M.Phil.LL.B.



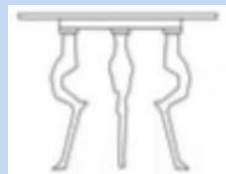
K.Ganeshan is a leading lawyer at Mumbai and is a legal advisor for Maharashtra Tamil Writers Foundation. He is a voracious reader and prolific writer. His special field is Philosophy and he shows much interest in all the fields of social sciences. His in depth knowledge of Anthropology, History and legal studies have resulted in contributing many research articles in Tamil language and literature.

“Light of Lights” and “King of kings”

“Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man” (Sophocles)

“Strong minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, weak mind discuss people” – Socrates

“Picturise Theory of Knowledge”



INTRODUCTION:

For me, Valluvar is one of the greatest philosophers and his theory of idea of thoughts are in a small couplet is “like a small chilli that is too hot”. In my journey of reading of all literature, philosophy, political philosophy, history, legal and so forth, I come across that ethics, knowledge are an important weapons in the way of life. These are power house in our mind. His ideology is unique and believed that ignorance and false pride cause devastation of the society.

Valluvar’s Power of Knowledge:

Valluvar explores that man has a power to think by having a special instrument called “MIND”. Valluvar depicts the important of mind from chapter-3 and especially in the chapter-41 in couplet 407 and 410. For him, education and thinking is the most important element for social and moral progress of the individual, society as well as king. For him ethics is primacy for the way of life. Knowledge is required for right action to have good and virtuous life. His theory of knowledge is to attain “MEIPPORUL” VAALARIVU, OR “MEIUNARTHAL”. But, he says that knowledge does not come easily, that knowledge of anything comes only at the end of a long epistemological process, struggle like a civil war within our mind intrinsically by critique, critical, analytical investigations, interactions, interpretations, introspection, examinations, arguments, prying of prying, pervading, augmenting, penetrating up and down like Dolphin until to find the Meipporul. He says that we will have to find the reality from

non-cognitive vs cognitive, imperfect vs perfect, what vs why by asking question of questions ceaselessly by arduous process.

Further, he simplifies his theory by making 133 issues and filtering the wrong knowledge or ignorance by sieving through 10 couplets like Upanishad. He moves on ascending order from opinion, knowledge and wisdom. He rejects the knowledge of five senses (Couplet-354) and accepts only cognitive knowledge (chapter-36). To me, knowledge takes us to have accurate, reliable, consistent mental assets in our way of life and to judge any issues.

Valluvar's political and Ethical Philosophy:

In general, we know human nature is curiosity to know everything, to get everything. According to thinkers, man is able to philosophize and think in deep. Philosophy means the love of wisdom. Philosophy includes everything and it is interconnected with each and every aspects of our life. So, philosophical thoughts are to be discussed continuously. Ethics is our inherited knowledge and discussed universally. It is multifocal concepts having several meaning. It includes both socio-moral duties as well as the religious commands. Man is a social animal who needs society. Society needs governments for social harmony. Healthy social life will be possible provided the members of the society have a social responsibility, good will, idealistic thinking for social value. He says that one who does not follow or adopt ethics, knowledge that will be dropped slowly to the hell of poverty, hungry and penury and indicates to chapters 105,106,107 and 108. He says that unexamined life is not worth living and asking us to philosophize each and every second and be aware what is going on in and around you. With this, let us analyse chapter-39 – Iraimaatchi, the greatness of king or what king ought to do and what ought not to do.

The King ought to be like Dolphin:

1. Valluvar is a socialistic, distributive revolutionary thinker. He wants that king should think in deep, pervading, augmenting, and penetrating like Dolphin up and down to have social harmony in the country. He does not want any impasses and despotic acts in the society through government. It seems that there would have been lot of social plights in kings' rule of his period. So, on seeing the ignorance of the king, social plights, cruelty his philosophical ink is started to flow from his pen and gave stunning advises to king to have democracy as under:

First, he tells that king should have six things army, people, wealth, a minister, friend, fort which is a lion among kings. Secondly, he ought to have –fearlessness, liberality, wisdom, and energy which are kingly character. Thirdly, he ought to have vigilance, wisdom and bravery and these have to be updated time to time. Fourthly, he ought not to do unjust, vice which protect the country and society for peaceful, harmony life. Fifthly, he has to protect the available treasures and equally distributed which shows his socialistic policy and distributive justice.

Light of Kings or King of Kings:

Sixthly, king should live with simple life. Seventhly, he should have pleasant speech with the people always. Eighthly, his kingdom should have systematic well planned with ethical direction with right knowledge. Ninthly, everything should be critically examined and no embittered while anybody complained on him or his rule. Tenthly, he is/ will be a “light of kings or king of kings” that has beneficence, benevolence, rectitude, and care on his country. Valluvar moves critically, ethically with right knowledge step by

step and finally concludes “Light of Kings”. According to me, only the philosopher can adopt these principles.

That time, all kings were ruling based on inheritance. It seems that king’s rule of that time would have been ruthless, cruel, selfish and despotic. So, he warns the king to rule philosophically with democratic principle. His intention was that” king should be a philosopher or king should become a philosopher”. This will be useful to all individual, family, institution, spiritual places too.

How King should become a Philosopher?

Valluvar says that if the inherited king or in this contemporary elected leaders are not having enough knowledge that they can study during the course of power. How to study? He says refer his chapter 40 learn Kasadra. Chapter41 will teach you what will happen if not learn. So, go on apply up to the chapter 104 step by step and explore the knowledge epistemologically as said above. On seeing the poverty, hungry, penury, Valluvar is the first person in the realm of literature and philosophy to send summon to the creator of this world and asked him to come to this world to see the devastation and die without getting food.(Couplet. No.1062)

Conclusion:

Thirukkural is having treasure of ethics and knowledges. Each and every couplet is gem of knowledge. If we go in deep investigation, it will lead you in new perspective in the way of life. His philosophical thoughts will take us to all philosophers, literary thinkers and also to all philosophical concepts to ruminate. For me, in this chapter, Valluvar has covered the whole ideas of political philosophy in his own unique perspectives as like Plato in “The Republic”.

Valluvar on Good Friendship

Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran



The Greek Philosopher Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC) says, “Man is a social animal. He who lives without society is either a beast or God”. Recent research in animal behavior reveals that some species of animals are capable of developing friendships. Specifically, zoologists have observed that giraffes, elephants, deer, chimpanzees, dolphins, bats, and a few other animals have the capability to develop some form of friendship. If this fact was known during the days of Aristotle, he might have said, “Man is a social animal. He who lives without a society should learn to develop friendships with other human beings like some of his animal counterparts.” Human society is made up of individual human beings who depend on it for their survival, growth, and development. The documented case histories of children brought up in isolation by animals prove that they lack the ability to function as human beings. The bilateral and mutually dependent relationship between society and human beings is like the relationship between the cells in the human body and the human body itself. In the course of life, human beings interact with their parents, family members, and other human beings. As a result of these interactions, when an individual develops a close

relationship and mutual affection with one or more people, then he is said to have developed friendships with them.

The concept of friendship has received the attention of philosophers since the days of the Greek philosopher Plato (428/427 BC – 348/347 BC). Among the western philosophers who scrutinized friendship, the prominent ones are Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC), Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533 – 1592), and Sir Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626). Plato discusses the nature of friendship in his dialogue, the *Lysis*. In this dialogue, Plato attempts to convey Socrates' idea of friendship. Plato's student, Aristotle, has clearly enunciated his views on friendship in Books VIII and IX of his *Nicomachean Ethics*. According to Aristotle, there are three kinds of friendships: friendships of pleasure, utility, and virtue. People engage in the friendship of pleasure because of the pleasure it brings to them. The friendship of utility is where people are friends because of the advantages they gain from being friends. The friendship of virtue is based on the moral and intellectual qualities of the friends. Of these three kinds of friendships, the friendships of pleasure and utility are considered incidental and are easily terminated when the pleasure or utility ceases to exist. The friendship of virtue is deemed the best because it is the friendship between people who are intrinsically good, and Aristotle considers such friendship as lasting and complete. The Roman philosopher and orator Cicero considers friendship the greatest gift the gods bestowed upon mankind, with the only exception being wisdom. He is of the opinion that only good men are capable of being good friends and that the friendship of the virtuous is desirable for its own sake. One of the French Renaissance's influential writers, Montaigne, believes that friendship between two men is the pinnacle of love. He also believes that friendship is the mixing of two souls as one soul in two bodies. For him,

real friendship is a rarity. The English philosopher, statesman, and author Francis Bacon agrees with Aristotle that anyone who is delighted in solitude is either a beast or a god. To him, friendship is useful to lighten one's heart by revealing pent-up feelings and emotions. Apart from this therapeutic value, friendship is also helpful for attaining mental clarity. Bacon contends that many things can be fulfilled only with the help of a friend, and therefore friendship is essential for everyone. In fact, according to him, if a man does not have a friend, he may as well leave this world.

Like the above-mentioned western philosophers, Valluvar has also written extensively on friendship. Although his ideas bear some resemblance to those of Aristotle, his treatment of the subject of friendship is much more comprehensive than that of Aristotle and others. Valluvar considers love as the quintessence of life. If love is missing in one's life, then he is nothing but a frame of bones covered with skin (kural – 80). Love begets affection in one's heart and affection begets the immeasurable excellence of friendship (kural – 74). Since love is the quintessence of life, it follows that human beings are quite capable of developing friendships. Many people consider friendship an important aspect of their life. Valluvar covers friendship from the point of view of an ordinary individual as well as that of a king (or leader of a nation). He has described his ideas regarding friendship in more than seventy kural. He discusses the value of good friendship, the dangers of evil friendship, the friendship that is to be avoided, the critical importance of diligence in making friendship, the advantages of befriending great men, and the need to avoid the association with evil men. His philosophic yet pragmatic approach to friendship is indeed amazing.

The importance and nature of good friendship

Valluvar considers a good friendship very similar to Aristotle's concept of the friendship of virtue. As Aristotle observed, man is a social animal and as such, he needs interactions with other members of society. In the initial stages, he develops casual acquaintances. If there are common values and mutual bonds, then the acquaintances turn into friendships over time. Valluvar considers that although developing good and intimate friendships is difficult, it is still worth doing it. There is nothing like a good and intimate friendship that can offer protection and support for one's efforts.

Is there anything more difficult than developing a good and intimate friendship? Is there anything that can offer more protection and support for one's activities than such a friendship?

(kural – 781)

Of course, the answer to the questions raised in kural 781 is negative. Valluvar contends that a good and intimate friendship will continue to grow and become stronger. He compares such a friendship to a waxing moon and a great book. These comparisons are very illustrative and informative to understand and appreciate Valluvar's ideas about the nature of good and intimate friendship. At the time of the new moon, the moon is invisible. Then, during the ensuing days, it is increasingly more and more visible and eventually becomes the full moon. According to Valluvar, good and intimate friendship among men of good character is like the waxing moon and the friendship among fools deteriorates like a waning moon. Of course, the waxing moon begins to wane after the full moon. But, like all metaphors, this comparison should not be taken literally. In addition to comparing good friendship to a waxing moon, Valluvar also compares the good and intimate friendship among men of good character to a great book. Every time one reads a great book, one appreciates the value of that great book and gets more

insight. So also, the good and intimate friendship among men of character grows stronger. The kurals describing these comparisons are as follows:

The friendship of worthy men is like the waxing moon, and the friendship of the fools is like the waning moon. (kural – 782)

Every time one studies a great book, one appreciates its beauty and value. So also is the noble friendship among good men. (kural – 783)

The real purpose of true friendship is also to provide unconditional and sincere help. Valluvar uses an interesting analogy to illustrate the unconditional help that results from true friendship. If an individual's garment slips and he is about to be subject to indecent exposure, then the individual's hand grabs his garment instantaneously. In this action, the individual does not consider the various options and weigh the pros and cons of each option. His immediate and almost unconscious instantaneous reaction to the situation is to grab the slipping garment so that he will not be exposed.

Like a hand that goes to the rescue when a garment slips, providing spontaneous help to a friend when he faces adversity is true friendship. (kural – 788)

The Greek historian Plutarch (45 AD – 120 AD) says, "I don't need a friend who changes when I change and who nods when I nod; my shadow does that much better." In other words, a true friendship does not imply total agreement on everything. A true friend should take the liberty to offer criticism and good guidance when needed. Valluvar goes one step further and says that a true friend should even be ready to share the sufferings and misfortunes of his friend.

True friendship keeps one away from the wrong path, guides in the right direction and if necessary, shares the misfortune. (kural – 787)

These ideas of Valluvar are not impractical. Historical references depict extraordinary friendship among two or more people helping one another and even sharing their misfortunes. For example, the Greek legend about Damon and Pythias is well known for true friendship, where one of them volunteers to sacrifice his life for his friend.

One would wonder whether intimate and frequent contact is essential for developing and sustaining friendships among two or more people. Valluvar is of the opinion that frequent meetings and constant companionships are not necessary to maintain a true friendship. What is really needed is that there should be mutual understanding and love for each other.

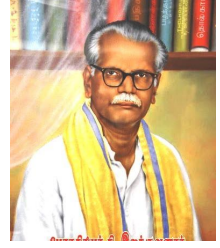
Mutual understanding and identity of feelings alone count for close friendship, for which constant companionship and interactions are not really necessary. (kural – 785)

It is interesting to note that these days people develop and maintain friendships through correspondence and social media without really having frequent meetings. The friendship between the Tamil King Koperunchozhan and the poet Picir Anthaiyaar is an excellent example of a deep and true friendship where the two of them never met each other.



THIRUKKURAL EXPRESS

KuralNeri in English: Founder: Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar



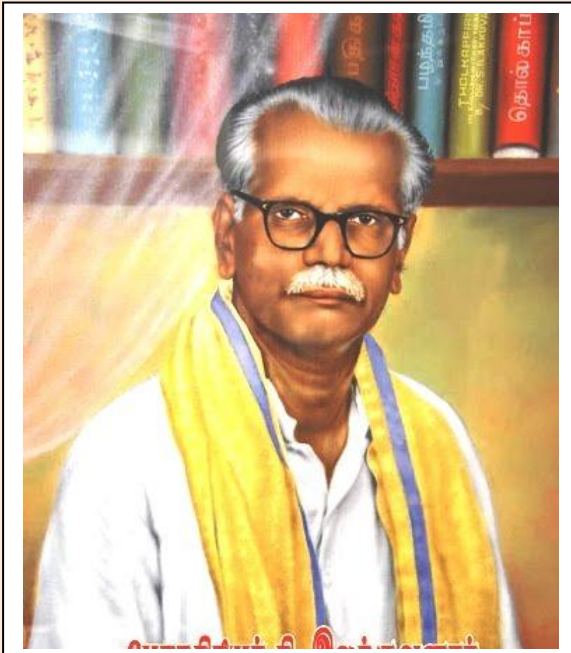
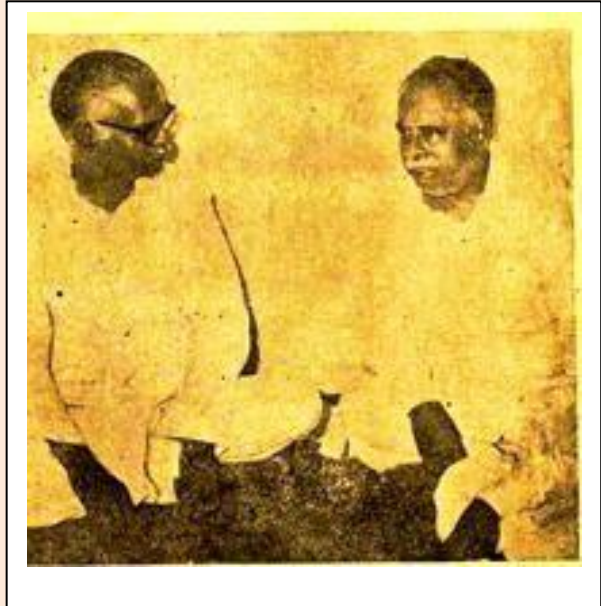
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PROF.S.ILAKKUVANAR-AN UNSUNG HERO

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Ilakkuvanar,the Dauntless Warrior

--Prof.A.Ayyasamy



C.N.A.,Karumuththu
Thiyagarajan& Ilakkuvanar

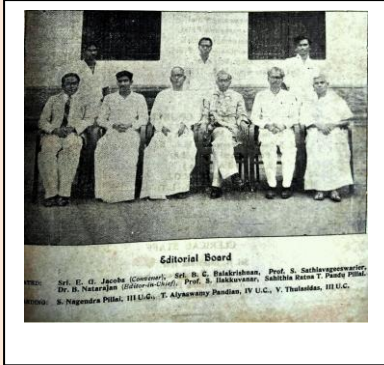
After having learnt about Robert Caldwell, it will be very appropriate to think of Si. Ilakkuvanar (1909-1973), who in his younger days, considered Caldwell's 'Comparative Grammar' as his bible. According to the observation made by a classmate of his, young Ilakkuvanar had read it at least thirty six times. Such Anna,was the attraction the work had for him. Add to this his contact with the Dravidian ideology which was beginning to bring the youth of those days under its sway, and you have the stuff Ilakkuvanar was made of.



A Cartoon published by
Murasoli depicting the
imprisonment of
Ilakkuavanar as the
imprisonment of Mother
Tamil

Having lost his father at the tender age of seven, and his family income having greatly shrunk, he had to discontinue his education after the primary level. He literally tended cattle for some time. Yet, his thirst for education was so insatiable that somehow or other he limped his way through his school and even managed to join the Tamil pulavar course, in spite of jeering from his relatives who called him irresponsible. He not only successfully completed the course, but later went upto

the doctoral level, winning medals and accolades all the way,



Ilakkuvanar in S.T.Hindu college while Dr.B.Natarajan, the renowned Economist was the Principal.



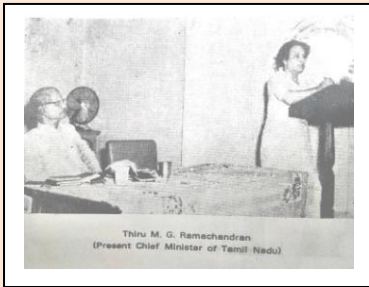
In a meeting-Dr.Kalaighnar is speaking

Love for Tamil became the life-breath of Ilakkuvanar and he continued to serve his mother-longue in more ways than one. First of all, he taught Tamil literature to his students with such dedication that many of them were electrified with love for the language. Kalaighnar Karunanidhi and R.Nallakanu were among his students. He perpetuated the memory of the Tamil savants Tolkappiar, Thiruvalluvar and Ilango Adigal by making his students, and the public, get up festivals and conference to honour them.

The chaste Tamil movement started by Maraimalai Adigal (for whom he developed a great admiration) attracted Ilakkuvanar and he started speaking and writing in a language devoid of any foreign words, like Sanskrit or English. Those were the days when even Tamil scholars used an affected, rather pedantic, style, with a mixture of alien words. Ilakkuvanar was dirided by such 'scholars', but he least minded it being convinced of the correctness of his action. His conviction attracted the students, who



As a Principal of S.T.Hindu college, Nagercoil.



M.G.R. addressing a meeting while Ilakkuvanar was the Principal at Nagercoil.

enthusiastically followed his style, to the chagrin of his colleagues.

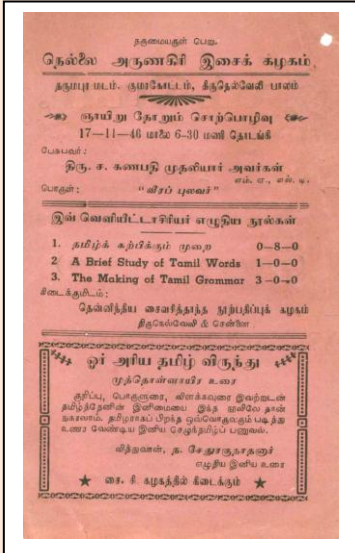
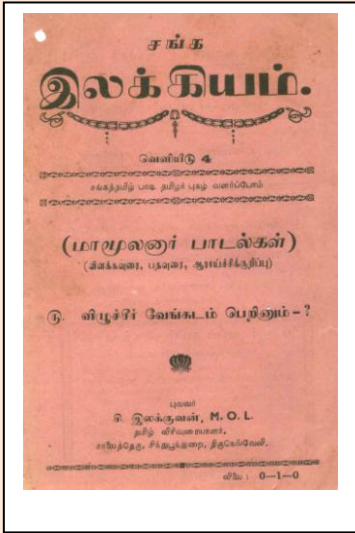
In those days when people were not even aware of the existence of the Sangam classics and such masterpieces like Tholkappiyam and Thirukkural Ilakkuvanar set about popularizing them. Often he conducted evening classes for interested people, free of cost, which meant that they burnt his own pocket; He wrote voraciously on Tholkappiyam and Tirukkural taking them to the doorsteps of the common man. He brought out an English translation of Tholkappiyam, laboring at it for ten years, making it a classic which has won wide acclaim. It may be noted that when Arignar Anna had an audience with the Pope in 1968, Ilakkuvanar's Tholkappiyam translation was one of the three works he presented to the Pontiff. (The other two were Tirukkural and Silappathikaram.)

This indefatigable scholar published weeklies and fortnightlies setting a high standard in journalism too. Many of them had to be stopped abruptly for he had to move from place to place. That did not deter him and he would start a new weekly or fortnightly in the new place. He even ran a daily though only for a few



months. His editorials touched upon various topics affecting the country, bringing out the wide sweep of his interests.

His most lasting contribution will be the critical works he produced as a profound scholar. Citing a number of unassailable proofs he has fixed the age of Tolkappiam a 7th century B.C. He has written an excellent work on the methodology for teaching Tamil, adopting the methods used in England for teaching English. He has published copious commentaries on noted ancient classics. He has made extensive research in the field of comparative grammar and linguistics, formulating his own theories. Though wedded to the Dravidian movement, he has been an objective, unbiased scholar. He has advocated for pride of place for Tamil and Sanskrit, considering them as the two languages with claims for antiquity as well as greatness. He has written an excellent biography of Kamaraj. His epitaph on Nehru brings out all the qualities of the Prime Minister and lists out all the good he did for the country.



"Sanga Ilakkiyam" A weekly publication by Ilakkuvanar

With all his scholarship, dedication and sincerity, Ilakkuvanar had to lead a chequered life as he lived in

days when scholars connected with the Dravidian movement were hounded and hunted. Often love for Tamil was interpreted as treason. He never lasted in any job for more than a couple of years. This happened even in the evening of his life. He was incarcerated twice, once when he planned to embark on a walkathon for making Tamii the medium of instruction for higher studies and the second time for opposing the imposition of Hindi.

All men who have praised Ilakkuvanar for his contribution and qualities of head and heart have invariably mentioned one quality: his courage. He always did what he considered right against heavy odds, subjecting himself to persecution from the authorities and derision from his fellow-scholars. Even old age and illness did not damper his spirit. Ilakkuvanar will always be remembered for his courage and conviction

Program of Ilakkuvanar's tour for the propagation of Sngam classics

Valluvar on Evil Friendship

--Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran

The concept of friendship has received the attention of philosophers since the days of the Greek philosopher Plato (428/427 BC – 348/347 BC). Among the western philosophers who scrutinized friendship, the prominent ones are Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC), Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533 – 1592), and Sir Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626). Plato discusses the nature of friendship in his dialogue, the Lysis. In this dialogue, Plato attempts to convey Socrates' idea of friendship. Plato's student, Aristotle, has clearly enunciated his views on friendship in Books VIII and IX of his Nicomachean Ethics. According to Aristotle, there are three kinds of friendships: friendships of pleasure, utility, and virtue. People engage in the friendship of pleasure because of the pleasure it brings to them. The friendship of utility is where people are friends because of the advantages they gain from being friends. The friendship of virtue is based on the moral and intellectual qualities of the friends. Of these three kinds of friendships, the friendships of pleasure and utility are considered incidental and are quickly terminated when the pleasure or utility ceases to exist. The friendship of virtue is deemed to be the best because it is the friendship between intrinsically good people, and Aristotle considers such friendship as lasting and complete. Valluvar agrees with Aristotle that friendships of utility and pleasure are evil and should be avoided. Valluvar also provides examples of other types of evil friendships that should also be avoided.

The types of evil friendships to be avoided

In the course of life, one comes across many people, and some of them are found to be compatible with mutual interests. Then, as a result of further interactions,

acquaintances become friends. Sometimes, people do not take time to analyze the character and behavior patterns of the people they come across, and they develop friendships without sufficient investigation. As the friendship develops, they begin to understand more and more about their friends. Some of these friendships may turn out to be what Aristotle considers friendships of pleasure or friendships of utility. Valluvar considers the friendships of pleasure as well as the friendship of utility as evil friendships. In addition to these two kinds of friendships, there is another kind of friendship that Valluvar considers evil. That is friendship with undependable people. This phenomenon of friends being undependable is not new. Throughout the ages, there have been several instances of infidelity, betrayal, and other disgraceful acts under the guise of friendship. In addition to the three types of friendship mentioned above, Valluvar does not favor friendship with fools, people who create problems, and people who do not possess good character. In all these cases, Valluvar's advice is to discontinue such friendships.

Friendship of Pleasure: According to Valluvar, the purpose of true friendship is not for mutual entertainment and pleasant companionship. Superficial smiles and merry making are not the objectives of true friendship.

Friendship does not mean simply a smiling face. More than a mere smiling face, true friendship offers real delight to the heart of the friends. (kural – 786)

Friendship is not for pleasant laughter alone; it is to step forward, provide criticism, and correct a friend for his transgressions. (kural – 784)

What comes from the enemies is a hundred million times better than
what comes from the friendship of those who are interested only

in merry-making and laughter.

(kural – 817)

Friendship of utility: As Aristotle points out, there are some people who are friends for the sake of utility. They want to be friends with others only for the sake of the benefits they obtain or expect to obtain from their friends. In these cases, Valluvar advises that it is not really worth it to continue such friendships.

What does it matter if one keeps or loses the friendship of those who are friendly when there is something to gain and desert when there is nothing to gain? (kural – 812)

People who calculate how much they can gain from a friendship are like prostitutes and thieves.

(kural – 813)

Friendship of undependable people: According to Valluvar, friends should help each other under all circumstances. To emphasize the importance of dependability among friends, Valluvar says, “Friendship may be said to be on its throne when it possesses the power of supporting one at all times under all circumstances in life (kural – 789). “ However, there are people who are not very dependable. They will desert their friends when their friends are undergoing adverse situations in life, and they cannot be counted upon for any help. Valluvar compares such people to a horse that deserts its rider at a critical time on a battlefield. It is better to be alone than to be in their company. There are people whose deeds do not match their words. They are likely to promise more than what they can deliver. In a sense, these people are also not really reliable, and they are hypocrites. Valluvar believes that friendship with undependable people should be discontinued.

Solitude is more desirable than the company of those who resemble the untrained horses which desert their riders on the battlefield.

(kural – 814)

It is better to avoid than to continue the evil friendship of those mean people who offer no protection during adversity.

(kural – 815)

Don't even dream of associating with people whose words and deeds do not match.

(kural – 819)

Other kinds of friendships to be avoided: In addition to those who are fair-weather friends and those who are undependable, Valluvar mentions five different types of people whose friendships should be avoided.

- First, one should avoid the friendship of fools because it is just a waste of time, and there is no virtue in it.
- Second, there are those who raise objections and put-up ,obstacles to things that can easily be accomplished.
- Third, there are those who are very loving in private and ridicule their friends in public.
- Fourth, there are people who do not have good character. They are likely to influence their friends, tempt them into bad habits, and lead them towards immoral or illegal activities. Valluvar says, "Water takes the character of the soil through which it flows. So also, people's character changes with their associations (kural – 452)." For example, it is not uncommon for youngsters to get into the habit of smoking,

experimenting with drugs, or using alcohol due to the influence of their friends who have such afflictions.

- Fifth, there are people who discourage their friends and curb their enthusiasm to accomplish their goals.

The following five kural explain how to deal with the friendships of these five different kinds of people.

The hatred of the wise is a million times better than the excessive intimacy with a fool. (kural – 816)

Gradually abandon the friendship of those who create problems for accomplishing tasks that can be easily performed. (kural – 818)

Avoid the association with those who are nice to you in private and ridicule you in public. (kural – 820)

Even if a friend shows excessive love towards you, it is better to reduce the friendship with him if he lacks good character. (kural – 811)

Do not entertain thoughts that would restrain your enthusiasm, and do not have friendships with those who forsake you in adversity. (kural – 798)

Anna on Ilakkuvanar's translation of Tholkappiyam

STUPENDOUS is the word that arises spontaneously as one goes through this work an achievement worthy of the erudite scholar, Dr. Ilakkuvanar.

This is no mere translation of Tholkappiyam-the greatest, grandest and the most ancient Tamil work. Doctor Ilakkuvanar has given us a faithful portrayal of Tamilakam itself.

Tholkappiyam is the bed-rock on which a grand edifice of literature stands- a literature about which, we Tamilians have got every right to be elated.

To translate such a work of fundamentals as Tholkappiyam, one needs a critical mind of high calibre and Doctor Ilakkuvanar has demonstrated this aspect in abundance.

Doctor Ilakkuvanar, is well-known already as a scholar of rare eminence, bold and unbiassed. Behind this work that Doctor Ilakkuvanar has given us, is enshrined years of intense study, critical analysis and comparative thought.

Doctor Ilakkuvanar has done yeoman service by rendering Tholkappiyam in the English language and the English knowing world will now be in a position to realise and appreciate the genius of ancient Tamilnad.

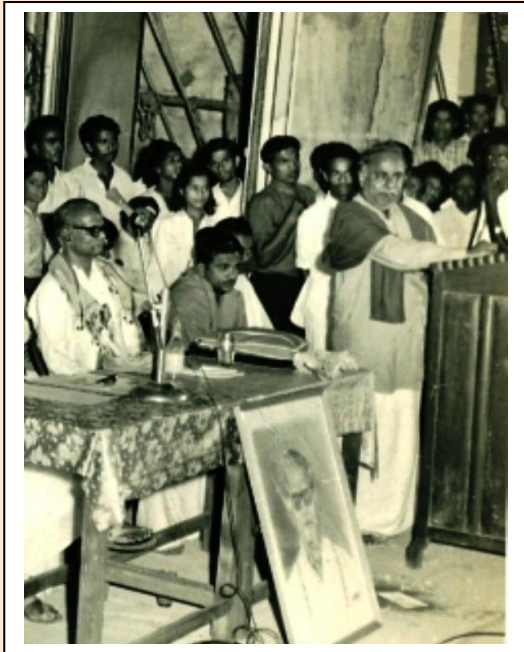
Tamilians have got every right to feel proud of Tholkappiyam and Doctor Ilakkuvanar's masterly work is bound to enable scholars of the English speaking world to evaluate correctly the heights attained by Tamilians, long long before many many nations attempted to perfect their languages.

Tamilians in particular and students of literature in general, owe a debt of gratitude to Doctor Ilakkuvanar for this work.

It is not for me to enumerate the various aspects to be found in this work, nor is it possible to express fully our feelings of appreciation in a cursory way--enough to state that Tamilians are entitled to feel proud of this magnificent work. I am confident that those who appreciate the present-day spirit of renaissance in Tamil language, will make the fullest and most fruitful use of this masterpiece.

I pay my deep-felt thanks to Doctor Ilakkuvanar for having given us 'Tholkappiyam' in the English language.

-C.N. ANNADURAI M.A.,M.P.



Anna speaking on Ilakkuvanar's 55th birthday celebration

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Thirukkural, the proud possession of the Tamil people, remains at the same time as a magnificent masterpiece of literature which the entire humankind adores as a precious treasure of pragmatic thoughts and valuable ideas. While in every other work of the same kind, man is addressed with a racial label and ethnic identity, Thirukkural addresses to the entire humanity, irrespective of race, nation, colour or creed. The main aim of this wonderful treatise on human life is to guide everyone in the world to lead a blissful life.

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False Friendship and Choice of Friendships



Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran

False friendships of the enemies and how to handle them

Valluvar classifies friendships into three categories. First is the friendship of virtue, where friends genuinely help each other without any hesitation whatsoever. Second is the evil friendship, where someone expects benefits out of the friendship and looks for only pleasure out of friendship. Furthermore, friendship with undependable people is also considered evil friendships. Valluvar urges that evil friendship should be suspended and discontinued if possible. The third category of friendship is false friendship, where an enemy with evil intentions acts like a friend for the specific purpose of inflicting harm. For example, Judas acted like a close associate of Jesus and betrayed him. Nathuram Godse pretended like an ardent admirer and disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and shot him in close quarters. Sometimes, a friend might turn into an enemy and continue his friendship hiding his enmity. The Roman politician Marcus Julius Brutus, popularly known as Brutus, was a friend of the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar. Brutus turned into an enemy and assassinated Julius Caesar. There are numerous other instances of enemies pretending to be friends for the specific purpose

of hurting their friends. Judging from Judas' betrayal of Jesus and Brutus' assassination of Julius Caesar, it appears that this type of evil behavior has been in existence for a long time. This aspect of friendship did not escape the attention of Valluvar, who seems to have been a shrewd observer of human behavior. He discusses enemies' undesirable and false friendships and suggests ways to handle them.

Nature of enemy's friendship: Valluvar uses an interesting metaphor to describe the false friendship of the enemies. He says that it is like the anvil supporting the iron before it is beaten into shape or cut. Sometimes, enemies may pretend to be offering support while waiting for the right time to attack. The relevant kural is as follows:

The false friendship of an enemy is like an anvil to strike on when
the opportunity is right. (Kural – 821)

An enemy may have a smile on his face and successfully hide his evil intentions. He may speak nicely to give the impression of real friendship. One should be careful not to trust someone's words if there is any incompatibility in attitude or thinking. When a bow is bent, it indicates that it is being prepared to launch an arrow. So also, when an enemy speaks sweet words, it is an indication of the enemy's hidden intentions to inflict harm. Even when someone has tears in his eyes, his hands may conceal a dangerous weapon. In all these cases, one should be shrewd to distinguish between genuine friendship and false friendship of the enemy.

If there is no accord in mind with someone, their words should
not be trusted. (Kural – 825)

Even if the enemy speaks kind and pleasing words like a friend, his true nature will be immediately identified (by those who are shrewd). (Kural – 826)

Do not be deceived by the kind and courteous words of an enemy. They are like the bending of the bow by the archer in preparation for launching an arrow.
(Kural – 827)

The saluting hands of an enemy may be hiding a lethal weapon. So also are his tears of sympathy. (Kural – 828)

In addition to the warnings about the enemy's kind words and tears of sympathy, Valluvar also prescribes additional practical solutions to handle the enemies who pretend to be friends. He says that the associations with such enemies should be slowly and tactfully terminated.

Be superficially friendly and terminate the friendship with those who feign to be very friendly outwardly and despise you in their heart. (Kural – 829)

When an enemy wants to be your friend, show external signs of friendship and avoid real friendship. (Kural – 830)

Importance of due diligence in the selection of friends

More than any other philosopher, Valluvar has emphasized the need to proactively analyze the character of people with whom friendship is likely to develop.

Valluvar says, “Once friendship is made, it cannot be easily abandoned, and therefore it is important not to make friends indiscriminately (kural – 791).” He warns that friendships made haphazardly will lead to misery (kural – 792). Therefore, before making friends, one should pay sufficient attention to the character, family background, personal shortcomings, and the close associates of the one with whom friendship is contemplated (kural – 793). In addition to the importance of careful investigation before developing friendship, Valluvar also emphasizes the significance of cultivating friendship with those who can counsel with the right advice and avoiding friendship with those who are likely to forsake during times of adversity.

Examine and secure the friendship of wise and bold men who will counsel you even if it hurts and rebuke you severely when you go astray. (Kural – 795)

Cherish as friends those who can remove present ills and guard against future ones. (Kural – 442)

Valluvar’s ideas about friendship apply to an ordinary individual and to a king (or a leader of a nation or organization). When Valluvar talks about things that are very important for a king, he says. “The king who has an army, citizens, wealth, ministers, friends and fortifications is a lion among kings (Kural – 391).” Obviously, the implication of this kural is that the king who has a strong army, loyal citizens, sufficient wealth, efficient ministers, reliable friends, and effective fortifications is a lion among kings. Also, in the section on kingship, Valluvar emphasizes the need for a king to disassociate himself from the evil people and maintain friendships with the wise men who would give

him the right advice and be helpful to him under all circumstances. The impact of evil friendships and false friendships of enemies would have serious consequences for a king and his kingdom. The advice for an individual to discontinue the evil friendship and the false friendship of the enemy is equally applicable to a king or a country's leader. It is common practice among the nations of the world to align themselves with friendly nations so that they can help each other in case of an attack by a common enemy or catastrophic calamities.

Valluvar's in-depth understanding of human behavior and his analysis of the nature of friendships are truly amazing. Valluvar's ideas on friendship are valid today as they were during his days, and they are likely to be valid in the future too. No wonder scholars like Dr. V. C. Kulandaiswami call the Kural "The Immortal Kural."

The Culture of Peace and Thirukkural



--Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar

"A Culture of Peace is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life based on respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation.

The full definition given by this UN Declaration is:

"A culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on:

Respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation;

Full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law;

Full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts;

Efforts to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations;

Respect for and promotion of the right to development;

Respect for and promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men;

Respect for and promotion of the right of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information;

Adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations; and fostered by an enabling national and international environment conducive to peace."

: UN, "Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace", resolution 53/243, p. 2, General Assembly, 93rd session, Oct. 1999, UNESCO.

The UN Declaration on a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence contains more detail than needed and was politicized in the process of its adoption. The culture of peace has been defined in a number of different UN resolutions, and I prefer the following definition which combines the approaches taken by two important UN resolutions: the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted in 1999; and the 1998 UN resolution on the culture of peace:

A culture of peace is an integral approach to preventing violence and violent conflicts, and an alternative to the culture of war and violence based on education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament.

The final eight points ("education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament" are the eight points of the Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly.

The phrase "alternative to the culture of war and violence" comes from the initial paragraph of the 1998 UN resolution on the culture of peace which reads in full:

Recalling the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations and the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and recalling also that the creation of the United Nations system itself, based upon universally shared values and goals, has been a major act towards transformation from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace and non-violence,

Note that in this article, I have used the phrases "culture of peace" and "culture of peace and non-violence" interchangeably. The former should be assumed to include non-violence, since non-violence is a necessary aspect of the culture of peace. Similarly, the "Global Movement for a Culture of Peace," should be assumed to be, more precisely, the "Global Movement for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence" (or "Nonviolence", if one wishes to be more consistent with the terminology of Gandhi).

Thirukkural may surely be called as the universal scripture due to its broad outlook appealing to the whole of humankind.

Thirukkural attributes two separate chapters,in this matter one for for non-violence
And another for non-killing.

Chapter-32 of Thirukkural,titled 'Non-violence empahasizes the importance of it for a peaceful life.

311. It is the nature of the spotless not to inflict suffering on others, though by it they may get wealth and renown.

312. It is the nature of the stainless not to resist evil.

313. Even our vengeance for a wanton injury results in our own unbearable sorrow.

314. The noblest revenge is to put the foe to the blush by our acts of kindness.

315. What profiteth one's reason, if one does not feel others, sufferings as his own and guard against them ?

316. Avoid all that causes pain to others.

317. It is the supremest virtue not to commit at any time even slight injury to others.

318. How is it a man inflicts injury upon others knowing how painful it would be to himself?

319. As the night follows day, evil that we do recoils on us.

320. All sufferings befall those who inflict harm on others. Those who desire immunity from suffering never commit injury,

33.Non-killing

321. If you would ask ‘ What is a virtue ? ’-’tis but non-killing.

From killing aught of lives on earth do all the evils spring.

322 The quintessence of all the codes of law of every sect Is but to share one’s bread with all beings and them protect.

323 A virtue good is non-killing, unique and sans compare. But next to that is non-lying, a virtue good and rare.

324 If you would ask. ‘ What is the way of goodness true?’tis taught:

It is the way which doth devise the non-killing of aught .

325 Of all who have, in dread of birth renounced the world, the king

Is he who dreads all killing and who promotes non-killmg.

326. The death-god who doth swallow lives never would dare to spring

Upon the life of one who keeps his vow of non-killmg

327 Do not from whatever being part its life it doth cherish,

Should even such act of abstinence make thy own self perish.

328 Although the blessings born of killing lives in sacrifice

May be quite great, the noble hold them as demeaning vice.

329 The beastly men of cruel acts of killing are indeed

By men discerning deemed as those who are meanest breed.

330. The men of wound-stained frames and starving, low lives are, 'tis said

The men who had the living beings killed, spilling their blood on?

These two chapters, it is reliably learnt were sent by Leo Tolstoy to Mahatma Gandhi so as to introduce Thirukkural to him.

In this context, it is relevant and significant to recall how inspired by Valluvam or the way of Kural, Mahatma Gandhi practiced the same and proved that Valluvam is not a Utopian ideal but a practical proposition. Gandhiji said "I learnt Tamil only to enable me to study Thiruvalluvar's Kural through his mother tongue itself. There is none who has given such a treasure of wisdom like him!" It is interesting to note that Gandhiji came to know of Thirukkural, through Leo

Tolstoy, the Russian Philosopher and writer. In 1908 Tolstoy wrote a letter which was titled as "A letter to a Hindu". The letter was later translated and published by Mahatma Gandhiji with an introduction.

"To me, as a humble follower of that great teacher whom I have long looked upon as one of my guides, it is a matter of honor to be connected with the publication of his letter, such especially as the one which is now being given to the world."

Gandhiji describes Tolstoy's way and approach to life through the following words:

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“Tolstoy’s life has been devoted to replacing the method of violence for removing tyranny or securing reform by the method of non-resistance to evil. He would meet hatred expressed in violence by love expressed in self-suffering. He admits of no exception to whittle down this great and divine law of love. He applies it to all the problems that trouble mankind.”

Tolstoy had quoted the couplets of Thirukkural in the chapter on “Not doing evil” (Innaa ceyyaamai) or Non-violence and the chapter Non-killing.

Tolstoy in his letter to Gandhiji had described Thirukkural as Hindu Kural. This letter of Tolstoy which quoted Thirukkural drew Gandhiji’s attention to learn Thirukkural. He described Thirukkural as “Tamil Holy book”. Gandhiji’s life was contained in the two words: Non-violence and Truth. Thirukkural enunciates the same two in a single verse in the same order:

“Non-killing (non-violence) is the supreme virtue; If you
want a second one follow truth (non-falsehood)” — [Kural-323]

Gandhiji’s respect for Thiruvalluvar and regards for Thirukkural can be seen in a note he published in his journal under the Caption “Tamil Holy Book”. “Thiruvalluvar is a

Tamil saint. Tradition says that he is a weaver. He gave us the famous Thirukkural - holy maxims described by the Tamils as the Tamil Veda. (‘Harijan’ dated 6th July 1935)

Gandhi learnt Tamil from an affluent merchant Thillaiyadi Vedhiyan Pillai whose name is ignored by Gandhian scholars and by his Tamil learning taught Tamil to the resident-students of Tolstoy ashram, a relevant fact worth quotable here.

Of all the Thirukkural couplets quoted by Tolstoy,,it is told that the couple which tells,
323 A virtue good is non-killing, unique and sans compare.

But next to that is non-lying, a virtue good and rare.

attracted Gandhis attention and he took it as his motto. Non-killing and non-violence renamed as Ahimsa and non-lying renamed as Sathyagraha were his politico-social strategies throughout hs life.

Inspired strongly by Thirukkural, Mahatma Gandhi inspired all sections of the society to fight for freedom from the foreign yoke through his deliberately chosen path of truth and non-violence. He provided inspiration to many oppressed nations in the world to fight against colonization and become free. He continues to inspire the world even today after sixtytwo years of his martyrdom. Thus Thirukkural can be hailed as an eternal light which illuminates the world for over Two thousand years. Mahatma Gandhi got the spark from Thirukkural and from him Martin Luther King jr., Nelson Mandela and many more leaders who fought against oppression and tyranny adhering to a non-violent way preached by Thirukkural and practiced by Gandhiji.

Surely Truth and Non-violence are the only ways to contain terrorism and religious fundamentalism which are spoiling many parts of the world, where mass-murder and sabotage are destroying mankind and destabilizing many nations.

Thirukkural, the proud possession of the Tamil people, remains at the same time as a magnificent masterpiece of literature which the entire humankind adores as a precious treasure of pragmatic thoughts and valuable ideas.While in every other work of the

same kind, man is addressed with a racial label and ethnic identity, Thirukkural addresses to the entire humanity, irrespective of race, nation, colour or creed. The main aim of this wonderful treatise on human life is to guide everyone in the world to lead a blissful life. The author Thiruvalluvar never interferes in the work, anywhere, to assert his authority. Instead he acts as a friend and counselor, to remind the reader of this work, his or her duties and responsibilities to the family and society. If everyone follows his kind words of advice then there will not be any friction in the family and there will never be any chance of war in the world.

Thiruvalluvar neither preached a separate religion nor did he announce him as a messenger from God. Even though the first chapter of Kural is in praise of the Almighty, it does not denote any particular God, belonging to any particular denomination. In fact the mission of the Kural is to release the entire humankind from the clutches of religious fanaticism.

As according to Prof. M. Winterntz, Thiruvalluvar,” stands above all races, castes and sects, and what he teaches, is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder that the Kural has not only been much read, studied and highly prized in the land of its origin for centuries, but has also found many admirers in the West, ever since it has become known.”

Rev. P. Percival, a missionary in Jaffna, wrote of the Kural as “Nothing in the whole compass of human language can equal the force and terseness of the couplets in which Valluvar conveys the lessons of wisdom.” and there is no exaggeration in his assessment.

The renowned British missionary, Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope, a great Tamil Scholar who translated the Kural into English during the 19th century says the following about Valluvar:

All things changing, dieth not thy fame,

For thou art bard of Universal man.

Thiruvachagamani K.M.Balasubramanian describes the uniqueness of Thirukkural in a poetic manner. “The grandeur of a Milton, the grace of a Dante, the Universality of a Shakespeare, the sublimity of an Aristotle, the idealism of a Plato, and the moral fervor of a Marcus Aurelius, are all to be found in harmonious blending and appropriate proportion in this “Bible of Mankind.” This universal character notwithstanding, the Kural is the Testament of Tamils. It has been the fountain of inspiration to generations of geniuses, saints and moralists, statesmen and princes.” K.M.Balasubramanian succeeds in an exact presentation of the sublime qualities of Thirukkural in an inspiring manner so as to attract readers to have a study of this wonderful book. His rendering of Thirukkural in English has already attracted thousands of readers throughout the world and still remains as a befitting tribute to the great scholar Thiruvalluvar as it is a powerful tool to propagate Thirukkural to non-Tamil readers in India and abroad.

The famous Tamil poet Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharathiyar of the twentieth century says,

“The land of the Tamil speaking people has attained great glory by giving Valluvar to the whole world.”

Rev.G.U.Pope and K.M.Balasubramanian considered the task of translating Thirukkural as a mission and accomplished their noble venture in a splendid manner. There are fifty-eight English translations of Thirukkural and it has been translated in as many as ninety-seven languages. It is not the intention of this chapter to give a detailed account of the translations, but we can have a glance of the list of translations available in the net. (Appendix-1) (Source: Wikipedia)

We have got details of Thirukkural translated into 97 languages. The data needs an update as after the announcement of the Indian government proclaiming Tamil as a classical language, there arose a multitude of translations of Thirukkural in many languages. It is believed that the translations are available in as many as 97 languages.

It is not my aim to catalogue the translations. The fact that it stands next only to Bible and Koran in getting translated throughout the world is a solid proof for the Universal appeal and International outlook of Thirukkural.

, Thirukkural do not belong to any particular religion. The Scriptures are to be followed without any question. Thirukkural requests everybody in the earth to question everything.

Whatever may be the matter heard thro' whate'er, whate'er source,

To perceive and to grasp its core of truth is wisdom's force. (Kural.423-Chapter43.Possession of Wisdom)

Whereas the scriptures insist on Faith, Thirukkural asks everybody to analyse everything before accepting. Thiruvalluvar did not perform any miracle and had not

established a religion. We do not know whether he left behind any disciples to propagate his sublime ideas.

He considered every man/woman as his audience. He did not restrict his book to any particular race, country or religion.

The universality of Thirukkural is its unique character. At a couple of occasions he had mentioned two gods, as mythical allusions, for the sake of comparison but on no poem he had advocated for the worship of any particular God or Goddess.

DR. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar rightly declares thus:.

” Among the world’s poets and prophets whose claims to universality may readily be conceded, Tiruvalluvar will certainly take high rank. His claims to the rank as a poet will not perhaps be contested at all. As a teacher of religion and morality he stands equally eminent. His work, the Kural, may be regarded as laying down a norm of life which would command acceptance from the votaries of differing religious persuasions, not only in India, the land of religions, but even elsewhere where religion as such may not command the same ready and unquestioning allegiance.”

As the universality of Thirukkural is well understood, widely acknowledged and highly appreciated by various scholars throughout the world, there is no meaning in comparing it with religious works which aim at a miniscule minority.

Periyar E.V.R. tells that “The Thirukural will pave a lofty way for the eradication of superstition and the enlargement of knowledge. The thoughts of the Kural should be

spread throughout the country. It should be brought about that education means the learning of the Kural and knowledge means, the awareness of the Kural.”

As per the citation given by UNESCO in 27-6-1970 Periyar is the “The Prophet of the new age; THE Socrates of South east Asia; Father of the social reform movement; and arch enemy of ignorance, superstitions, meaningless customs and base manners.”

It is only Periyar, who propagated Thirukkural to the Tamil society.

Why he chose Thirukkural as a guide for an ideal life?

He tells the reason. “The Kural is not a devotional book. It is not also a book of theology to reveal God: nor is it a book of religious doctrines for evangelism. It only teaches true and egalitarian conduct which is agreeable to all.

He who has intelligence and beholds knowledge as supreme and he who has the capacity to think and investigate will certainly respect and admire the Kural, follow it to some extent at least and keep it as his guide.

The Kural embodies in it ethics and practical ways of life, based on experience.

The Kural is a treasure house of knowledge. It is a work bound by reason.”

Vedam Venkataraya Sastry (21 December 1853 – 18 June 1929) was a Sanskrit and Telugu language poet, critic, Telugu theatre star and dramatist. He is known for providing authoritative editions of Sanskrit and Telugu classics. He is respected for providing authoritative editions of Sanskrit and Telugu classics. He had worked as a Sanskrit pandit in Madras Christian College for 25 years. He wrote original drama and translated Sanskrit dramas of Kalidasa and Harsha. He established a dramatic

association named Andhra Bhashabhimani Nataka Samajam in 1899. In the year 1920, he received Mahamahopadhyaya award by Andhra Mahasabha.

Sastry a scholar of the previous century clearly illustrates the uniqueness of Thirukkural in his article.

“The greatness of Thirukkural in the history of Indian literature, nay, in that of world literature cannot be over-estimated. It occupies a unique place both as a book of morals and an excellent piece of poetic composition. Though I wanted to confine myself to its Telugu translations and similar works in Telugu literature, I felt called upon, after going deeper into the book, that the subject needs wider treatment by its very innate universal appeal. As much is said of its poetic excellence I confine myself here to the first part of my statement, i.e. Kural as a book of morals. Modern scholars, in their enthusiasm and admiration to the great teacher, are not tired of calling the book a religious one, and a moral code. They call it the Tamil Veda, Tamil Bible, Tamil Koran and so on at the same time emphasising on its secular character and universal appeal standing above all sectarian and racial-prejudices. These statements sound contradictory and sometimes make one feel that they are the outcome of confused thinking. Religious views seldom rise above the prejudices of sect, caste, creed or nationality and humanity at present is, on this basis, divided into airtight compartments making cultural contacts and emotional integrity difficult, if not impossible. From my humble cursory glance of this great book I do not find anything religious about it. By religion I mean

anything I about God and other worldliness. There is nothing otherworldly in it and the author appears to have had no mind to teach his readers any practical way to realise God or find happiness in heaven at the end of this life on earth. He definitely wants us to realise actual facts around us in the mundane earth, strive to be happy in this birth in our present condition of flesh and blood and live a clean life without quarrels, differences and even small bickerings. He does not worry about God without being atheistic at the same time. He wants us to pray to God and be good but make no fuss about religiosity. “

As the renowned Sanskrit scholar Mahamahopadhyaya Vedam Venkataraya Sastry openly declares as “From my humble cursory glance of this great book I do not find anything religious about it.”, we need not be confused by some opinions that Thirukkural is an essence of Hindu Dharmasastras.

Thirukkural is neither an adaptation nor a translation of any other didactic literature in any other language. The genius of Thiruvalluvar who envisaged a world free from the clutches of religion, race and nationality is so great beyond any comparison. There is no single mention of any religion race or nationality. It appeals to the whole of humankind for unity, integration and solidarity for the building up of an egalitarian society devoid of differences and disparity.

“The distinction between man and man is based mainly on the difference of religion or color or nation. But there are no natural or physiological differences and distinction. The distinction of color is the result of different climate conditions. Such distinctions as these are, negation of the fundamental underlying unity between man and man. Kural

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code bases its principles on this unity and entire human race for common good, benefit and welfare. It teaches universal brotherhood, brother-hood of man and fatherhood of god.

Kural code is not confined to any country, race or religion. It is based on the principle of world citizen ship and world state. Any man is a citizen of the world and belongs to the world and the world belongs to him. It offers solution to the individual as well as to world problems, solutions to the political, social, economic, racial problems from which the world is suffering. Its outlook is the broadest. Kural is far above the religious level. Book of each religion is intended for those who owe allegiance to it; it extols that religion at the cost of others. Kural does not suffer from such limitation of religion; it teaches ethical life for the entire mankind. The value of Kural Neri is incomparably supreme, unequalled and unparalleled. Kural code is the message of Tamilian race conveying the principle of universal brotherhood to the rest of the world, contains the essence of Tamilian culture. It conveys a message of love to the world.”(Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar, KuralNeri: English Fortnightly-15/02/1966)

(The first part of my speech delivered through a zoom meeting)



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"I learnt Tamil only to enable me to study Thiruvalluvar's Kural through his mother tongue itself. There is none who has given such a treasure of wisdom like him!"

Mahatma Gandhi



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Thirukkural-Questions and Answers

-Thirukkuralaar R.Prabhakaran



1.1 God

Question:

What is the origin of this universe?

Answer:

'A' is the first letter of the alphabet. Likewise,

God is the origin of the universe.

(Couplet – 1)

Whatsoever is heard from whomsoever, to discern

the truth is wisdom.

(Couplet – 423)

அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி

பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு.

(குறள் – 1)

எப்பொருள் யார்யார்வாய்க் கேட்பினும் அப்பொருள்

மெய்ப்பொருள் காண்ப தறிவு.

(குறள் – 423)

Explanation:

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The existence of God and the origin of the universe are separate issues. The followers of major religions like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and a few other minor religions believe that God exists and created the universe. That is their belief. The followers of these religions constitute about 85% of the world's population. About 15% of the people are atheists or agnostics. Atheists do not believe in God and think that God did not create the universe. Agnostics believe that nothing is known or can be known of God's existence or nature or anything beyond material phenomena. Generally, they claim neither faith nor disbelief in God. So, for the agnostics, the origin of the universe is an unsolved mystery at present. Many scientists believe in God, and many other scientists do not. The famous scientist Albert Einstein was an agnostic.

The idea that God created the universe is based on belief rather than fact or science. So far, science has neither proved nor disproved the existence of God. According to Valluvar, to find the truth in what others say is real wisdom. That is, one should investigate the truth in what their religion preaches. After investigation, if they are convinced that what their religion preaches is correct, they should follow it. Otherwise, they should continue to investigate the truth about God. Therefore, it is really up to the individual to believe or not in the existence of God and that universe was created by God. Those who do not belong to any religion should also exercise their intelligence and explore the truth about God and the origin of the universe. The answer may be elusive. But it is better to investigate rather than believe something they do not understand or agree with. Ignoring this question, thinking that the answer is too difficult to find, is not real wisdom either.

2.1 Importance of Rain

Question:

What is the importance of rain?

Answer:

As the failing rain sustains the world, it is like
the elixir of immortality. (Couplet – 11)

Even the vast ocean on this earth will condense
if there is no rain. (Couplet – 17)

Life cannot exist without water in this world. Similarly,
virtue cannot exist without rain. (Couplet – 20)

வான்நின்று உலகம் வழங்கி வருதலால்
தான்அமிழ்தம் என்றுணரற் பாற்று. (குறள் -11)

நெடுங்கடலும் தன்நீர்மை குன்றும் தடிந்தெழிலி
தான்நல்கா தாகி விடின். (குறள் – 17)

நீர்இன்று அமையாது உலகெனின் யார்யார்க்கும்
வான்இன்று அமையாது ஒழுக்கு. (குறள் – 20)

Explanation:

If there is no rain for an extended period, the farmers cannot carry out agriculture. Food production will be severely affected, and there will be widespread famine. Water is needed to grow farm products and is vital for people and animals to survive. We need water for drinking, washing, bathing, etc. So, the absence of rain will lead to starvation, poor sanitation, ill health, and death. These catastrophes can be avoided if there is a normal amount of rain.

It is believed that people who consume the elixir of immortality will avoid death. Since rain provides water and water helps people to be alive, it is compared to the elixir of immortality.

If there is no rain, the ocean water will become more saturated with salt and other chemicals, which will be hazardous to the sea animals. The absence of rain will result in poverty and disrupt law and order in society.

3.1 Quality of Greatness

Question:

Who is considered great?

Answer:

Those who accomplish rare things are considered great,
while those who cannot accomplish rare things
are not considered great. (Couplet – 26)

செயற்கரிய செய்வார் பெரியர் சிறியர்
செயற்கரிய செய்க லாதார். (குறள் – 26)

Explanation:

To be considered great, one should accomplish rare and challenging tasks. For example, Mahatma Gandhi, who led the freedom fight against British rule in India and obtained India's freedom, accomplished a monumental task. Nelson Mandela, who fought for the rights of the South Africans, won the fight, and established a democratic government with equality for all the people in South Africa, is another example of a great man who accomplished a difficult task. Periyar (E.V. Ramasamy) worked hard throughout his life for women's rights and communal reservation for the non-Brahmins of Tamil society. He also worked hard to instill a sense of self-respect and to encourage the Tamil people to use rational thinking. He has indeed accomplished irreversible and permanent positive changes in Tamil society. These men have accomplished difficult tasks that resulted in significant benefits to their societies, which is why they are considered great men. Hard work alone does not qualify one to be considered great. One is deemed to be great only if one achieves the desired goal after hard work.

4.1 Virtue

Question:

What is Virtue?

Answer:

A blemishless mind is the basis of all virtue; everything else is a vain show.

(Couplet – 34)

Virtue is conduct that is free from envy, greed, anger, and offensive speech.

(Couplet – 35)

மனத்துக்கண் மாசிலன் ஆதல் அனைத்து அறன்
ஆகுல நீர பிற.

(குறள் – 34)

அழுக்காறு அவாவெகுளி இன்னாச்சொல் நான்கும்
இழுக்கா இயன்றது அறம்.

(குறள் – 35)

Explanation:

Collins Dictionary defines virtue as thinking and doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong. This is what exactly Valluvar means by virtue. We all learn what is right and what is wrong from our education, upbringing, and the society in which we live. If our mind is pure without blemishes, then it will direct us to do the right things and avoid the wrong things. Therefore, virtue is keeping the mind free from blemishes like envy, greed, anger, and the tendency to speak words that hurt others.

5.1 Married Life

Question:

What should be the goal of married life?

Answer:

If married life has love and virtue, then love will result
in courteous and compassionate behavior, and virtue
will lead to benefits.

(Couplet – 45)

அன்பும் அறனும் உடைத்தாயின் இல்வாழ்க்கை

பண்பும் பயனும் அது.

(குறள் – 45)

Explanation:

Love refers to the love among family members and their relatives. Over time, love will lead to friendships with others. If a couple loves each other, their family members, relatives, and friends, such love will shape them into people with kindness, compassion, and good character. People with good character will lead a peaceful, happy, and harmonious life. Virtue is doing the right things and avoiding the wrong things. If a couple follows virtue in their life, then they will not cause any harm to themselves or others. Also, since they do the right thing, they will be happy, make others happy, lead a harmonious life, and be respected by others. Therefore, the goal of married life is to lead a life with love and virtue.

6.1 Good Qualities of a wife

Question:

What are the good qualities that a wife should have?

Answer:

A woman who maintains her family status, and manages
her household well within her husband's resources,
is an ideal wife.

(Couplet – 51)

What greater treasure can there be, than a woman
who has the abiding strength of chastity.

(Couplet – 54)

One who never falters in protecting herself, while
tending to her husband, and keeping the good name
of the family, is an ideal wife.

Couplet-56)

மனைத்தக்க மாண்புடையள் ஆகித்தற் கொண்டான்

வளத்தக்காள் வாழ்க்கைத் துணை.

(குறள் – 51)

பெண்ணின் பெருந்தக்க யாவுள கற்பென்னும்

திண்மைஉண் டாகப் பெறின்.

(குறள் – 54)

தற்காத்துத் தற்கொண்டாற் பேணித் தகைசான்ற

சொற்காத்துச் சோர்விலாள் பெண்.

(குறள் – 56)

Explantaion:

Managing a household and upholding the family's reputation is the joint responsibility of the husband and the wife. Also, a wife and her husband should take care of themselves and other members of the family. So, what is mentioned as the virtue for a wife also applies to a husband. Though it is a joint responsibility, in the past, male members have successfully shifted the responsibilities to their spouses because they were at home and did not go to work outside their homes. These days, in many families, both the husband and the wife work. So, the responsibilities must be shared between the husband and the wife. Tamil society has always emphasized chastity as the most significant quality of women, and it was not considered so for men. In the past, men's infidelity was often condoned instead of being condemned. These days, chastity is regarded as the right conduct for both sexes.

7.1 Upbringing of Children

Question:

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How should a father bring up his son?

Answer:

The good thing a father can do for his son is to prepare him for a prominent role in the assembly of scholars.

Couplet – 67)

தந்தை மகற்காற்று நன்றி அவையத்து

முந்தி இருப்பச் செயல்.

(குறள் – 67)

Explanation:

Valluvar lived about 2000 years ago. During his days, the role of women was confined to having children and managing their homes. Men's role was to work for a living and provide financial support to their families. In the past two thousand years, society has changed significantly. These days, both men and women are responsible for managing the affairs of their homes. Women are as capable as men of working and making money to support their families. This is evident from the increasing number of women in the workforce. Also, the preparation of their daughters and sons for prominent roles is the responsibility of both parents. If Valluvar were alive today, he would say that the good thing parents can do to their children is to prepare them for prominent roles in the assembly of scholars. It should be noted that the people who play a prominent role in the assembly of scholars are scholars with high academic achievements and recognized accomplishments. So, the idea is that parents should help their children to get a good education, encourage them to work hard, and become successful in their chosen profession.

7.2 Responsibility of the Children

Question:

What can a son do in return to his parents who paid a lot of attention to his upbringing?

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Answer:

It is the son's responsibility to conduct himself so that others would admire how hard this man's father should have worked to groom him like this.

(Couplet 70)

மகன்தந்தைக்கு ஆற்றும் உதவி இவன்தந்தை

என்னோற்றான் கொல் எனும் சொல்.

(குறள் -70)

Explanation:

We should remember that Valluvar lived about 2,000 years ago. In those days, although male and female children received an education, only male children took up jobs and had the opportunity to excel in their careers. As per the conditions of those days, Valluvar's advice focuses on the son being an outstanding individual. Nowadays, it is not uncommon for parents to pay attention to their children's education and accomplishments, irrespective of their sex. Therefore, children's responsibility is to become outstanding individuals in their life so that others will wonder how hard their parents should have worked to bring up their children to be so successful. If we replace the word 'son' with 'child', Valluvar's advice is valid even today.

8.1 Love

Question:

What is the difference between a person who loves others and the one who does not?

Answer:

The ones who do not love others will keep everything to themselves, whereas those who love others will give even their bones to others.

(Couplet - 72)

அன்பிலார் எல்லாம் தமக்குரியர் அன்புடையார்

Explanation:

Obviously, no one can give their bones to anyone. By saying, “they will give even their bones to others,” Valluvar means that those who love others will not hesitate to share what they have with others. Those who do not love others are often selfish, and they will not share what they have with others. On the other hand, the people who love others are often generous, and they share whatever they have with others. There are numerous examples of people helping their loved ones with money, food, clothing, and shelter. There are also examples of people donating one of their kidneys, parts of their liver, bone marrow, and blood to their loved ones. Also, people who love others volunteer to help others.

9.1 Hospitality

Question:

How should we treat our guests?

Answer:

Even the elixir of immortality should not be consumed
without sharing with the guests waiting outside. (Couplet – 82)

The guest withers at the unwelcome look of the host
like the anicham flower, which withers when smelt. (Couplet – 90)

விருந்து புறத்ததாத் தானுண்டல் சாவா
மருந்தெனினும் வேண் டற்பாற் றன்று. (குறள் - 82)

மோப்பக் குழையும் அனிச்சம் முகந்திரிந்து
நோக்கக் குழையும் விருந்து. (குறள் – 90)

Explanation:

We should treat our guests with respect and kindness. We should share our food with our guests. Even if what we eat is the elixir of immortality, we should share it with our guests. Also, we must treat our guests in such a way that they feel welcome and feel that we are happy to entertain them. If our facial expressions or body language indicate that we think they are unwelcome, they will wither like the delicate anicham flower that wilts as soon as it is smelt.

Thirukkural and Mahatma Gandhi



--Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar

Voice of Valluvar is indeed the guiding star that can lead the humanity in the path of virtues - virtues of kindness and hospitality, sweet speech and gratitude, equity and self control, good decorum and forgiveness, charity and compassion, non-violence and non-killing, renunciation and desire less mind, truthfulness and free from jealousy etc. which are bound to elevate the human beings to the level of divine beings. Indeed herein lies the peace and harmony of the society!

In this Scenario it is relevant and significant to recall how inspired by Valluvam or the way of Kural, Mahatma Gandhi practiced the same and proved that Valluvam is not a Utopian ideal but a practical proposition. Gandhiji said *"I learnt Tamil only to enable me to study Thiruvalluvar's Kural through his mother tongue itself. There is none who has given such a treasure of wisdom like him!"* It is interesting to note that Gandhiji came to know of Thirukkural, through Leo Tolstoy, the Russian Philosopher and writer. In 1908

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Tolstoy wrote a letter which was titled as “A letter to a Hindu”. The letter was later translated and published by Mahatma Gandhiji with an introduction.

“To me, as a humble follower of that great teacher whom I have long looked upon as one of my guides, it is a matter of honor to be connected with the publication of his letter, such especially as the one which is now being given to the world.” Gandhiji describes Tolstoy's way and approach to life through the following words:

“Tolstoy's life has been devoted to replacing the method of violence for removing tyranny or securing reform by the method of non-resistance to evil. He would meet hatred expressed in violence by love expressed in self-suffering. He admits of no exception to whittle down this great and divine law of love. He applies it to all the problems that trouble mankind.”

Tolstoy had quoted the couplets of Thirukkural in the chapter on “Not doing evil” (*Innaa ceyyaamai*)

“The aim of the sinless One consists in acting without causing sorrow to others, although he could attain to great power by ignoring their feelings. (Kural-311)

The aim of the sinless One lies in not doing evil unto those who have done evil unto him.(Kural-312)

If a man causes suffering even to those who hate him without any reason, he will ultimately have grief not to be overcome.(Kural-313)

The punishment of evil doers consists in making them feel ashamed of themselves by doing them a great kindness.(Kural-314)

Of what use is superior knowledge in the one, if he does not endeavor to relieve his neighbor's want as much as his own? (Kural-315)

If, in the morning, a man wishes to do evil unto another, in the evening the evil will return to him." (Kural-319)

Tolstoy in his letter to Gandhiji had described Thirukkural as Hindu Kural. This letter of Tolstoy which quoted Thirukkural drew Gandhiji's attention to learn Thirukkural. He described Thirukkural as "Tamil Holy book". Gandhiji's life was contained in the two words: Non-violence and Truth. Thirukkural enunciates the same two in a single verse in the same order:

"Non-killing (non-violence) is the supreme virtue; If you want a second one follow truth (non-falsehood)"--- [Kural-323]

Gandhiji's respect for Thiruvalluvar and regards for Thirukkural can be seen in a note he published in his journal under the Caption "Tamil Holy Book". "Thiruvalluvar is a Tamil saint. Tradition says that he is a weaver. He gave us the famous Thirukkural - holy maxims described by the Tamils as the Tamil Veda. ('Harijan' dated 6th July 1935)

Inspired strongly by Thirukkural, Mahatma Gandhi inspired all sections of the society to fight for freedom from the foreign yoke through his deliberately chosen path of truth and non-violence. He provided inspiration to many oppressed nations in the world to fight against colonization and become free. He continues to inspire the world even today after sixty-two years of his martyrdom. Thus Thirukkural can be hailed as an eternal light which illuminates the world for over Two thousand years. Mahatma Gandhi got the spark from Thirukkural and from him Martin Luther King jr., Nelson Mandela and many more leaders who fought against oppression and tyranny adhering to a non-violent way preached by Thirukkural and practiced by Gandhiji.

Surely Truth and Non-violence are the only ways to contain terrorism and religious fundamentalism which are spoiling many parts of the world, where mass-murder and sabotage are destroying mankind and destabilizing many nations.

Recently a lot of “intellectuals” have started their onslaught against Thirukkural and Sangam classics. Especially the importance given to Thirukkural irks and irritates them. They have become questioning the authenticity of the fact that Thirukkural had opened a new vista in Gandhi's political career. They can't accept the truth that Kural was the guiding star for Gandhi.

Here you can see a blog's content which questions the prominence given to Kural;

Tolstoy, Thirukkural, Gandhi and S Ramakrishnan

The origins of this controversy lies in a speech given by S Ramakrishnan in Chennai about Gandhi as a writer. SRa made a comment that Gandhi asked Tolstoy about the book that inspired him and Tolstoy replied that he learnt a lot of his philosophies from Thirukkural.

A reader got irritated with this unsubstantiated statement and wrote a harsh letter. (I don't have that link). SRa replies with a couple of links - from yahoo answers. The ego buster of Tamil literature Maamallan, poked fun at SRa's links. Maamallan's contention is that the link says that Mahatma Gandhi said in a speech in 1943 that he was inspired by Thirukkural. However Gandhi was under arrest from 1942 - 44, so this could not have been possible. The other link SRa gave is an article from News today, an evening paper from Madras. Maamallan asks SRa why not go to the source, the letters between Tolstoy and Gandhi and prove his assertion.

Due to my curiosity I started digging around. Initially I found the correspondence between Tolstoy and Gandhi. There was only one mention about Indian Philosophy in general, with no reference to Thirukkural. So I shot a mail to Maamallan immediately.

After a little more digging, I found "A letter to A Hindu" written by Tolstoy to Tarakdas, the editor of Free Hindustan in reply to Tarakdas letter to him. In this letter Tolstoy elaborates on why this oppression of majority Indians by a handful of Englishmen happened. This letter is written in chapters, and before each chapter he quotes Indian scriptures - Vedas, Upanishads, Krishna (I think he meant Gita) and Hindu Kural (his words). That is the extent of the link between Kural and Tolstoy. Gandhi got a typed copy of this letter, and as a conscious editor verified with Tolstoy about its veracity and published it with his own introduction.

Nowhere did Gandhi ask Tolstoy about the books and scriptures that inspired him nor did Tolstoy mention Kural. But a simple search of "Tolstoy, Kural, Gandhi" throws up a lot of links claiming the same.

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So I did a date wise search and the results were hardly surprising. Till 2005 there is no mention in Google about Tolstoy telling Gandhi about Kural. In 2005, there was a Valluvam conference on Thirukkural, where in a research paper was submitted saying that Valluvam inspired Mahatma Gandhi. The author gives references of Gandhi praising Kural (which is entirely possible) and drops in a line "Gandhi was inspired by Ruskin, Thoreau and Tolstoy".

From 2008 onwards links start sprouting claiming that Tolstoy told Gandhi about being inspired by Kural. I can't pinpoint who started this, but a reasonable guess is Prof. Aranga Nedumaran whose speech is quoted by many. So from there, SRa seems to have derived his fact.

I had sent a couple of mails with these facts to Maamallan, but then found the topic juicy enough for me to revive my blog.

Isn't it basic common sense to question why should Gandhi learn about Kural from Tolstoy? Gandhi worked with Tamils of South Africa, so that might be a more logical place for him to learn about Thirukkural rather than a couple of letters from a Russian writer.

I do accept that there is a chance that there is a correspondence between Tolstoy and Gandhi just like what SRa said. If so, point me to the original correspondence and I will take back this post. Do not give links to he said so, she said so posts.

Since the Tamil literary world / blogs are split into camps I put up these disclaimers.

1. I do not know Maamallan or SRa or any other writer personally.
2. I do think that SRa excels in exaggerated romanticisation of the mundane.
3. I do think that facts are of utmost importance.---

<http://chenthil.blogspot.com/2012/01/tolstoy-thirukkural-gandhi-and-s.html>

Even a cursory reading of this blog will display the prejudice and bias of the blogger.

A microblogger at Quoro gives a befitting answer to this paranoid blogger.

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In a Thiruvalluvar Festival held in 2015 former MP, Era.Sezhiyan , younger brother of former ADMK minister Nedunchezian and former minister in the Janata government said that Gandhi learnt the concept of non-violence from a letter written to him by famous Russian novelist **Leo Tolstoy** who quoted from a German translation of **Thirukkural**. The Father of the Nation had said that he came to know about **Thirukkural** only from **Tolstoy**.

This article has appeared in The Hindu which only post articles after double checking the source and hence it could be true.

-Thangiah Kannan

Another blogger narrates chronologically the occurrences that show Mahatma's regard for Kural.

In a letter to Maganlal Gandhi in 1910, he makes a reference to a popular phrase from Thirukkural, in a rather strange context. "Since Santok has given birth to a daughter, there is no worry on her account now. Karka kasadara karpavai. Please ponder over this sentence printed at the top of Pope's [Tamil] grammar. There could hardly be a task more difficult than to conquer one's passion in regard to one's own wife." (10) He alludes to the kural:

Learn, what is to be learnt, with no flaws; once learnt,

stand by what you learned. [391]

Interestingly, the actual maxim given on the first page of the Handbook was a proverb 'கற்கக் கற்கக் கசடறும்' [Karka karka kasadarrum], translated by Pope as 'Difficulties will vanish as you learn on'. This fortuitous error by Gandhi, thanks to which he has actually

correctly cited a phrase from Thirukkural, is a fairly clear indication that he was familiar with the work at that time. As we will see, he was to repeat this error in another letter.

After his return to India, he writes to his friend, G.A.Natesan, “You must let me have Tamil books please. I want books for beginners and books for men like Sundaram. I want all Dr. Pope’s books. Will you please attend to this as early as you can?” (11)

In a letter to his son, Devdas Gandhi, in 1919, he again alludes again to the aforementioned phrase from Thirukkural, “Give this in Tamil as the motto: Karka Kasadara Karpavai. Beneath this, give the Hindi equivalent, which Swamiji will provide, of “Drop by drop fills the lake”, and beneath it still, give in English:”Constant dropping wears away stones”. The Tamil saying occurs on the first page of Pope’s book. Find its equivalent in Telugu and give that too.” (12)

In a speech in 1920 delivered at Ahmedabad, he makes a reference to G.U.Pope with a poetic flourish, “No Indian in Madras has served South India so well as did Pope —not the Pope of the Iliad fame. I am ever in love with human beings and would, therefore, always want to steal people’s hearts. In order that I might steal the hearts of my brothers of the South, I had to learn their language. I cannot just now quote anything from the writings of the Rev. Pope, but this I will tell you that the poems, or rather the poetry, in Tamil which even the peasant can enjoy as he waters his field is just superb. The watering of the field begins even before the sun has risen. Bajri and wheat, everything is covered with pearly dew. The liquid drops on the tree leaves shine like pearls. This is what the men , these peasants, as they water the fields sing about.” (13) This is a clear indication that he had indeed read the poetry of Pope, and presumably Thirukkural too.

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The next time we see Thirukkural in the records on Gandhi's life was in 1927, when 'A friend sends from Rangoon rupees twenty-five as donation for the propaganda of the spinning-wheel and writes' a letter. He starts the letter with his misgivings about doing the sixteenth-day ceremony for his deceased father, 'a slavish, meaningless imitation of shraddha'. He considered it 'to be a hoax designed to be practised on the religious susceptibilities of the people'. He went on to use Thirukkural to establish how he can believe in 'shraddha as a thing offered in piety and devotion with a charitable intention.'

"As you say in Young India dated 24-2- 1927, 'only two classes of people are entitled to charity and none else—the Brahmin who possesses nothing and whose business it is to spread holy learning, and the cripple and the blind.' Our great immortal sage, Thiruvalluvar has said :

'A Brahmin is that sannyasi who has an overflowing love towards all living creatures.'
[30]

Because I could not conceive of a man who has a better claim than you and a more charitable purpose than that of the spinning-wheel, I have sent you this amount. There is also another way of commemorating the memory of one's own parents. The same sage Thiruvalluvar has again said :

'The gratitude of a son to his father must consist in the son conducting himself in the world in such a way as to excite from the world the approbation that his father must have performed a great tapasya to beget this son.' [70] I may add that I have this ideal at my heart." (14)

Gandhi published this letter approvingly, with his own diatribe against meaningless ceremonies, and commending ‘the example of the correspondent to those who are anxious to do only that which is right, and free themselves from self-deception’.

However, he makes no direct remarks about Thirukkural.

The first recorded instance of Gandhi himself speaking about Thirukkural was later in 1927. While speaking at a meeting held at Tuticorin, he refuted an allegation that he was not giving much importance to Tamil. As per the news published in The Hindu, he said:

“You very rightly draw my attention to the treasures that are to be found in Tirukural. Let me inform you that some twenty years ago I began to learn Tamil with the desire and object of studying Tirukural in original. It has been a matter of deep sorrow to me that God never gave me time to finish studying the Tamil language. I am entirely in favour of the agitation for making the vernaculars as medium of instruction. We ought to learn the Tamil language and prefer it to English and place it above all other languages.” (15)

In the same year, Mahadev Desai wrote a ‘catechism’ summarising the vast array of questions faced by Gandhi during his tour of Tamilnadu, especially regarding the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question, and his responses to them. One of the questioners referred to Thirukkural.

“Q: Kural you know. Do you know that the author of that Tamil classic says there is no caste by birth? At birth, he says, all life is equal.

A. He says it as an answer to the present-day exaggerations. When superiority was claimed by any varna, he had to raise his voice against it. But that does not cut at the

root of varna by birth. It is only the reformer's attempt to cut at the root of inequality.”
(16)

This discussion was making an apparent reference to this Kural:

All beings are born equal. Distinction

Comes with differences in profession. [972]

Though this conversation is clearly unplanned, it does appear that Gandhi had quickly identified the exact kural that was being referenced and was able to expound on it fairly accurately.

Later, in 1935, Gandhi wrote a short essay on Thirukkural with the heading, 'Tamil Holy Book'. (17)

“Thiruvalluvar was a Tamil Saint. Tradition says that he was a Harijan weaver. He is said to have lived in the first century of the Christian era. He gave us the famous Thirukural—holy maxims described by the Tamilians as the Tamil Veda and by M. Ariel as 'one of the highest and purest expressions of human thought'. The maxims number 1,330. These have been translated into many languages. There are several English translations. The late V.V.S. Iyer, who founded the Sharmadevi Ashram for the service of Harijans among others, produced the latest translation. He died leaving Sharmadevi and his book to the nation. Sharmadevi now belongs to the Harijan Sevak Sangh. There are about 1,000 copies still left of the second edition of the translation. The price of the book was Rs. 5 originally. It has now been reduced to Rs. 2/8. The book has a

substantial preface written by the translator. The proceeds will be utilized for the Harijan service. To whet the reader's appetite I quote two maxims at random:

Take not away from any living thing the life that is sweet unto all,
even if it be to save thine own. [327]

Compare Goldsmith's:

No flocks that range the valley free
To slaughter I condemn,
Taught by the Power that pities me
I learn to pity them.

The other selection is:

Death is like unto sleep and life is like
the waking after that sleep. [339]

Compare Wordsworth's:

Death is but a sleep and a forgetting."

To Gandhi, the legends of Thiruvalluvar being a Harijan and a weaver must have been doubly appealing. Removal of untouchability and Khadi were top priorities for him then. The various tenets of Thiruvalluvar like love, righteousness, compassion towards all living beings, truth and generosity were all mirrored in Gandhi's own beliefs.



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Thiruvalluvar Era: 2053 –Purattasi-29

C.E.:2022-October-16

Your Excellency! For your kind attention!

There is nothing religious in Thirukkural!- A Sanskrit scholar, who has learned all the Vedas and sastras, clear your doubts!



Vedam Venkataraya Sastry
(21 December 1853 – 18 June 1929)

. From my humble cursory glance of this great book I do not find anything religious about it. By religion I mean anything about God and other worldliness. There is nothing otherworldly in it and the author appears to have had no mind to teach his readers any practical way to realise God or find happiness in heaven at the end of this life on earth. He definitely wants us to realise actual facts around us in the mundane earth, strive to be happy in this birth in our present condition of flesh and blood and live a clean life without quarrels, differences and even small bickerings. He does not worry about God without being atheistic at the same time.

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Vedam Venkataraya Sastry's futuristic insight

---Maraimalai lakkuvanar

Thirukkural, the proud possession of the Tamil people, remains at the same time as a magnificent masterpiece of literature which the entire humankind adores as a precious treasure of pragmatic thoughts. While in every other work of the same kind, man is addressed with a racial label and ethnic identity, Thirukkural addresses to the entire humanity, irrespective of race, nation, colour or creed. The main aim of this wonderful treatise on human life is to guide everyone in the world to lead a blissful life. The author Thiruvalluvar never interferes in the work, anywhere, to assert his authority. Instead he acts as a friend and counselor, to remind the reader of this work, his or her duties and responsibilities to the family and society. If everyone follows his kind words of advice then there will not be any friction in the family and there will never be any chance of war in the world.

Thiruvalluvar neither preached a separate religion nor did he announce him as a messenger from God. Even though the first chapter of Kural is in praise of the Almighty, it does not denote any particular God, belonging to any particular denomination. In fact the mission of the Kural is to release the entire humankind from the clutches of religious fanaticism.

As according to Prof. M. Winterntz, Thiruvalluvar," stands above all races, castes and sects, and what he teaches, is a general human morality and wisdom. No wonder that the Kural has not only been much read, studied and highly prized in the land of its origin

for centuries, but has also found many admirers in the West, ever since it has become known.”

Rev. P. Percival, a missionary in Jaffna, wrote of the Kural as “Nothing in the whole compass of human language can equal the force and terseness of the couplets in which Valluvar conveys the lessons of wisdom.” and there is no exaggeration in his assessment.

The renowned British missionary, Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope, a great Tamil Scholar who translated the Kural into English during the 19th century says the following about Valluvar:

All things changing, dieth not thy fame,

For thou art bard of Universal man.

Thiruvachagamani K.M.Balasubramanian describes the uniqueness of Thirukkural in a poetic manner. “The grandeur of a Milton, the grace of a Dante, the Universality of a Shakespeare, the sublimity of an Aristotle, the idealism of a Plato, and the moral fervor of a Marcus Aurelius, are all to be found in harmonious blending and appropriate proportion in this “Bible of Mankind.” This universal character notwithstanding, the Kural is the Testament of Tamils. It has been the fountain of inspiration to generations of geniuses, saints and moralists, statesmen and princes.” K.M.Balasubramanian succeeds in an exact presentation of the sublime qualities of Thirukkural in an inspiring manner so as to attract readers to have a study of this wonderful book. His rendering of Thirukkural in English has already attracted thousands of readers throughout the world

and still remains as a befitting tribute to the great scholar Thiruvalluvar as it is a powerful tool to propagate Thirukkural to non-Tamil readers in India and abroad.

The famous Tamil poet Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharathiyar of the twentieth century says,

“The land of the Tamil speaking people has attained great glory by giving Valluvar to the whole world.”

Rev.G.U.Pope and K.M.Balasubramanian considered the task of translating Thirukkural as a mission and accomplished their noble venture in a splendid manner. There are fifty-eight English translations of Thirukkural and it has been translated in as many as forty languages. It is not the intention of this chapter to give a detailed account of the translations, but we can have a glance of the list of translations available in the net. (Appendix-1) (Source: Wikipedia)

We have got details of Thirukkural translated into 38 languages. The data needs an update as after the announcement of the Indian government proclaiming Tamil as a classical language, there arose a multitude of translations of Thirukkural in many languages. It is believed that the translations are available in as many as 65 languages.

It is not my aim to catalogue the translations. The fact that it stands next only to Bible and Koran in getting translated throughout the world is a solid proof for the Universal appeal and International outlook of Thirukkural.

Whereas Bible and Koran are adored as the ‘Holy Scriptures’ of the major religions followed by millions, Thirukkural do not belong to any particular religion. The Scriptures

are to be followed without any question. Thirukkural requests everybody in the earth to question everything.

Whatever may be the matter heard thro' whate'er, whate'er source,

To perceive and to grasp its core of truth is wisdom's force. (Kural.423-Chapter43.Possession of Wisdom)

Whereas the scriptures insist on Faith, Thirukkural asks everybody to analyse everything before accepting. Thiruvalluvar did not perform any miracle and had not established a religion. We do not know whether he left behind any disciples to propagate his sublime ideas.

He considered every man/woman as his audience. He did not restrict his book to any particular race, country or religion.

The universality of Thirukkural is its unique character. At a couple of occasions he had mentioned two gods, as mythical allusions, for the sake of comparison but on no poem he had advocated for the worship of any particular God or Goddess.

DR. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar rightly declares thus:.

” Among the world's poets and prophets whose claims to universality may readily be conceded, Tiruvalluvar will certainly take high rank. His claims to the rank as a poet will not perhaps be contested at all. As a teacher of religion and morality he stands equally eminent. His work, the Kural, may be regarded as laying down a norm of life which would command acceptance from the votaries of differing religious persuasions, not

only in India, the land of religions, but even elsewhere where religion as such may not command the same ready and unquestioning allegiance.”

As the universality of Thirukkural is well understood, widely acknowledged and highly appreciated by various scholars throughout the world, there is no meaning in comparing it with religious works which aim at a miniscule minority.

Thirukkural is divided into three parts by the author Thiruvalluvar himself under the heads aRam(Righteousness), poruL (Wealth) and inbam (Love). Without looking into the meaning of these titles people are confusing it with the Sanskrit purusharthas and distort the structure of Thirukkural.

Purusha means an individual or person, and Artha means objective, meaning, or pursuit. The four Purusharthas are:

- Dharma: Righteousness, Duty
- Artha: Wealth
- Kama: Desire
- Moksha: Liberation

The four Purusharthas are the 4 aims of human life [Purusha = man (or person) and Artha= meaning (or aim/ambition)]. They are Dharma, Artha, Kaama, and Moksha.

The concept of Purusharthas basically indicates different values to be realized in human life through human efforts. There are four Purusharthas or aims of life as propounded by Manu, viz., Dharma (virtue), Artha (wealth), Kama (pleasure), and Moksha (liberation).

One can find the reference of these Purusharthas in various texts of Indian Philosophy.

We cannot find the reference of these Purusharthas in Vedas. The mention is found only in a couple of minor Upanishads viz; Suryopanishad and Ganapthy Atharvashrisha Upanishad

Purushartha, one of the most celebrated philosophical concepts in Sanskrit intellectual tradition, is thought to be a conception of the purpose of human life on the Earth.

Purushartha, the word and trend are alien to Tamil culture; especially to Sangam tradition. This got somehow its entry in the medieval period and later day commentaries.

People with malicious motives, masquerading as scholars with a pan-Indian approach, find pleasure in the distortion of Thirukkural, imposing a Sanskrit design and concluding Thirukkural is the essence of Dharmashastras.

Sastry, who lived at the fag end of nineteenth century and the first quarter of twentieth century, with his vast knowledge of Sanskrit, gives a befitting reply to such scholars who strain their every nerve to find the Purusharthas in Thirukkural.

“The reason for Valluvar omitting to write on Moksha in a separate chapter is noteworthy.” Observes Sastry, adding “To mention a particular approach to salvation, a Sivabhakti or Vishnubhakti would mar the secular character of his work.”

“I think he very wisely avoided unpleasant controversy by ignoring the chapter.” asserts the great scholar, who declares with a firm conviction that, “It is also likely that Moksha is automatically assured if one follows the other three properly as it is more in the nature of a reward for good way of life than a a way of living itself.”

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The sagacious scholar adept in Sanskrit vyakarnas and Telugu classics gives a befitting introduction to Thirukkural after a deep study in Telugu translations of Thirukkural.

We do not know the exact date and context of its publication, but it should have been published before his demise on 1923.

Dr.N.Sanjeevi,the then professor and Head of the Tamil department at University of Madras have found the script and included it in the publication of “First All-India Thirukkural Research Seminar Papers (May-1972)”

Hope our readers would enjoy this intellectual feast, which also serves as a ready retort to pseudo-elites, who maliciously indulge in the mischievous propaganda that Thirukkural is an echo of Sanskrit smritis and essence of Dharma shastras.

[This introduction and Sastry’s essay appeared in our previous year’s issue (Thirukkural Express-Oct21, 2021).They are again reprinted here.]

Thirukkural and its unique place in Indian Literature

-----Vedam Venkataraya Sastry

Vedam Venkataraya Sastry (21 December 1853 – 18 June 1929) was a Sanskrit and Telugu language poet, critic, Telugu theatre star and dramatist. He is known for providing authoritative editions of Sanskrit and Telugu classics. He is respected for providing authoritative editions of Sanskrit and Telugu classics. He had worked as a Sanskrit pandit in Madras Christian College for 25 years. He wrote original drama and translated Sanskrit dramas of Kalidasa and Harsha. He established a dramatic association named Andhra Bhashabhimani Nataka Samajam in 1899. In the year 1920, he received Mahamahopadhyaya award by Andhra Mahasabha.

His original works include Prataparudriya natakam (Prataparudra's Play) in 1897 and Usha natakam (Usha's Play) in 1901. He recreated Prataparudra's grandeur and created other memorable roles like Vidyanatha the poet, Chekumuki Sastry the courtier, and the simple Perigadu and Yelli, who became synonymous in Telugu theatre with rustic humour. He worked as Chief editor of Suryarayandhra Nighantuvu in 1916. He died in 1929 in Madras.

The greatness of Thirukkural in the history of Indian literature, nay, in that of world literature cannot be over-estimated. It occupies a unique place both as a book of morals and an excellent piece of poetic composition. Though I wanted to confine myself to its Telugu translations and similar works in Telugu literature, I felt called upon, after going deeper into the book, that the subject needs wider treatment by its very innate universal appeal. As much is said of its poetic excellence I confine myself here to the first part of my statement, i.e. Kural as a book of morals. Modern scholars, in their enthusiasm and admiration to the great teacher, are not tired of calling the book a religious one, and a moral code. They call it the Tamil Veda, Tamil Bible, Tamil Koran and so on at the same time emphasising on its secular character and universal appeal standing above all sectarian and racial-prejudices. These statements sound contradictory and sometimes make one feel that they are the outcome of confused thinking. Religious views seldom

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rise above the prejudices of sect, caste, creed or nationality and humanity at present is, on this basis, divided into airtight compartments making cultural contacts and emotional integrity difficult, if not impossible. From my humble cursory glance of this great book I do not find anything religious about it. By religion I mean anything I about God and other worldliness. There is nothing otherworldly in it and the author appears to have had no mind to teach his readers any practical way to realise God or find happiness in heaven at the end of this life on earth. He definitely wants us to realise actual facts around us in the mundane earth, strive to be happy in this birth in our present condition of flesh and blood and live a clean life without quarrels, differences and even small bickerings. He does not worry about God without being atheistic at the same time. He wants us to pray to God and be good but make no fuss about religiosity.

A cursory glance at the plan of his book confirms the above view. The treatise is divided into three parts usually known as Dharma, Artha and Kama (அறம் - பொருள் - இன்பம்) and as we have no proper English equivalent words we can just be satisfied by translating these as Virtue, Wealth and family life. Dharma is a very wide one. It may be called duty and man's duties are innumerable. He is bound by birth to behave in a particular way to his neighbours and react in a particular way to his surroundings. After praising God and mentioning of the blessings of rain, merit of ascetics and power of virtue he dilates upon domestic and ascetic virtues. About domestic virtue married life and the happiness of a householder are made much of. Stress is laid on hospitality, gratitude, self-control, fear of sin and one's own duty to society. Regarding ascetic virtue non-violence, non-killing, abstinence from flesh-eating and compassion are emphasised. All this shows that one should try to be as good as possible in every walk of life, as agreeable as possible to society and nature. In the second book or division he

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has taken up the state. From Domestic economy, if I can say so, he has gone to political economy. Herein he has prescribed a code of conduct for the rulers of a country. He has divided the state into seven parts, the King, the Minister or ministers, territory, fort, treasury, army and finally a friend of good advisor. This is exhaustive and includes everything required for politics and political economy. The last part or book devoted to இன்பம் (Kama or love). He advises young men and women just trying to understand the world to proceed in the proper path. Love is the most important factor in the life of a boy or a girl and any false step is enough to make the entire life of a person miserable. A boy or a girl has to think twice and choose well one's own partner in life. Proper advice is necessary at the stage of adolescence. Herein the great author is at his best in analysing human psychology and guiding humanity. Hence we find no advice given to anybody to become only God-minded. He does not ask us 'Bhaja Govindan' or say 'Namacha Sivaya' or 'Buddham Saranam Gachcami'. He simply says "You have many things to learn on earth, learn them and be happy.'

Now coming to the life and times of Thiruvalluvar much controversy has to be faced. No doubt he lived some two thousand years ago at the fag end of the third Sangam but his life history is surrounded by mystery. More stories are current that he was a weaver and was living at Mylapore, or that he was a royal drummer or civil servant of a low origin and his wife Vasuki was a devoted wife. Whatever these stories expects us to believe one thing is clear that he did not belong to any high class in life and was one among the masses well acquainted with life and its different aspects. Some are of the opinion that Valluvar was not his personal name and denotes the office he held under the state. If this view were to be correct we can safely equate the term Valluva with Vallava or Vallabha of the Asokan and later inscriptions contemporaneous with the Sangam

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periods. Inscriptions say... so and so king orders thus - 'mautri, purohita, samanta, amatya, ayuktaka, nigeektaka, adhikarika, mahattaran sakala naiyogika Vallabhan ittham ajnapayati . Here the term Vallabha denotes an officer. Whether it is Sanskrit term or a Dravidian one is not to the point but the term is found in use. As in later history many ministers and persons holding high posts in the service of the state are found as poets and writers it is not unlikely that Tiruvalluvar was in state service like Sekkilar of a later stage and wrote his book.

It is also curious to note that the famous author of Panchatantra, Vishnu Sarma, also lived at Mylapore a city that has great antiquity, Panchatantra mentions the place "aste Dakshinava Janapade Mahilaropyam nama nagaram." Though Panchatantra is different in plan by way of its cock and bull stories it gives, the saptanga theory of state and prescribes a good moral code of conduct. It, of course, has no chapter on love. As Panchatantra is slightly later than the Sangam period it is likely that Vishnu Sarma was influenced by Tirukkural and made certain parts easy for the public, of course writing in Sanskrit. I would like to make one point clear. Whatever the language the thought was Indian for the great Artha Sastra of Kautilya was already in the field. Its date being 300 B.C. and Chanakya is also said to be a southern Brahmin there is no doubt that whole of India was thinking alike. Later authors did not like the unscrupulous ways of Chanakya and condemned his methods as we find in Bana's Kadambari. Tiruvalluvar being impelled by his compassionate nature appears to have taken the Saptanga theory of state and modified the approach to one of ahimsa. We see much similarity between Tirukkural's second book and many works on arthasastra and definitely Tiruvalluvar has improved upon his predecessors. In Sanskrit we find many books on Niti sastra, loka niti and rajya niti and large chapters in Mahabharata. Some authors have dealt with these

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separately. Many of these are considered as later interpolations into the Mahabharata. If Tiruvalluvar was influenced by contemporary thought on these two aspects loka nitiஅறம், rajya niti, பொருள், his காமத்துப்பால்) is a forerunner of Vatsyayana's Kamasastra as his date is given as about the fourth century A.D. The greatness of Tiruvalluvar lies in this that he has felt that these subjects be better taken together and not studied separately. It is really very interesting to note that the great Sanskrit poet Bhartrihari has written his Subhashita on the same plan of Tiruvalluvar - Sringara, Niti and Vairagya satakas. One may deny the similarity that rajaniti is wanting and Vairagya that has no place in Tirukkural has a special chapter. The division is significant though with this difference. Tiruvalluvar's is a comprehensive view without Vairagyam.

There is a view that Thiruvalluvar was a Jain and was no other than the great Elacharya or Kunda Kundacharya (eg. Kundavai), the first pontif of the Jaina Sangham that was established at Madurai about 450 A.D. Though stress is laid on ahimsa we do not find any special Jaina philosophy. But coming in line with great architects of India who raised wonderful gopurams but kept their names secret, or wanted no publicity. Tiruvalluvar believed in service and no public recognition or title. That was his spirit.

Many want to equate Tiruvalluvar with some saints of a later age. But there are no miracles attributed to him and he was no Vedantist. Nor was he a Yogi like Vemana. Vemana criticised his contemporary society bitterly and heaped abuses against the so called orthodox. He had a large number of disciples. But Tiruvalluvar aimed no abuse against his contemporaries so strongly. His criticism was mild. The satakas of later Telugu literature contain many ideas of Kural but on a small scale. To compare Kural with the didactic literature will be interesting to show the differences than the similarities.

The writings of Vemana or other saints show their dissatisfaction with society whereas Tiruvalluvar has no grievance against anybody and appears to have been in cheerful mood. It is really unfortunate that Sanskrit thought was not influenced by his example of putting Dharma, Artha and Kama in a nutshell.

The reason for Valluvar omitting to write on Moksha in a separate chapter is noteworthy. There are side remarks and references to heavenly bliss but there they end. His period was one of religious strife. Buddhism and Jainism, Hinduism and local cults, Saivism and Vaishnavism, Christianity in some parts were all there. There was no common platform for these to meet and agree. To mention a particular approach to salvation, a Sivabhakti or Vishnubhakti would mar the secular character of his work. I think he very wisely avoided unpleasant controversy by ignoring the chapter. It is also likely that moksha is automatically assured if one follows the other three properly as it is more in the nature of a reward for good way of life than a way of living itself. It is a reward or phala for karma or action.

Though there is no Sanskrit translation or adaptation of this great Book, Telugu has the unique honour of being the earliest in Indian languages to have a translation. Indian translations were made earlier. The first Telugu translation was made in 1877 with elaborate notes by Venkatrama Srividyanandaswami of the Kanuparti family. He called it Trivarga Dipika. In 1892 Sri Sakkam Narasimhalu Naidu translated selection called Trivargamu. In 1906 another translation of selection was made by one Sri C. Lakshminarayana Sastry. The famous poet and translator of Kambaramayana into Telugu, the late Sri P. Sriramulu Reddi published his translation in 1948. My friend Challa Radhakrishna Sarma published his as Tamila Vedamu in 1954. In 1955 Sri

Jalayya published it as Nitisudha. Recently in 1966 another friend of mine, Sri Sonti Sripati Sastry published his translation as Sri Padula. Having lived in Tamilnad together with the Tamils the Andhras also share the feelings of the Tamils and welcome any number of translations with pride.

Source: Sanjeevi. N. (ed.), 1973. First All-India Tirukkural Research Seminar Papers (May-1972). Madras: University of Madras. pp.81-86.

Thirukkural-Questions and Answers



-Thirukkuralaar R.Prabhakaran

10.0 Pleasant words

Question:

Should we always use pleasant words?

Answer:

When a man knows that kind words bring joy and happiness,

why should he resort to harsh words? (Couplet - 99)

Using harsh words instead of kind and pleasant words is like

preferring raw fruits when ripe ones are available. (Couplet 100)

இன்சொல் இனிதீன்றல் காண்பான் எவன்கொலோ

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வன்சொல் வழங்கு வது?

(குறள் – 99)

இனிய உளவாக இன்னாத கூறல்

கனிஇருப்பக் காய்கவர்ந் தற்று.

(குறள் – 100)

Explanation:

While kind and pleasant words always bring joy and happiness, harsh words bring unhappiness and anger to others. When there are kind and pleasant words, using harsh and unkind words is like eating unripe fruits when ripe and sweet fruits are available. Therefore, we should always use kind and pleasant words in our speech. Also, it is a good practice to appreciate others and avoid finding their faults whenever possible.

11.1 Gratitude

Question:

How can we compensate someone who helped us without receiving any help from us?

Answer:

The gift of heaven and earth is not equivalent to a conferred benefit

where none had been received.

(Couplet – 101)

செய்யாமல் செய்த உதவிக்கு வையகமும்

வானகமும் ஆற்றல் அரிது.

(குறள் – 101)

Explanation:

Receiving help from someone in return for the help we have rendered to him is natural and perhaps even to be expected. When we receive help from someone we have never helped, there is no way to assess the value of such help. In other words, even the earth and heaven cannot measure up to the value of a spontaneous help given by someone out of sheer generosity.

11.2 Gratitude

Question:

What is the value of timely help?

Answer:

Timely help, though small, is of greater value than the earth. (Couplet – 102)

காலத்தி னாற்செய்த நன்றி சிறிதெனினும்

ஞாலத்தின் மாணப் பெரிது.

(குறள் – 102)

Explanation:

Feeding a man when he is really starving, performing a Heimlich maneuver on a choking man, and changing the tire of a car of an older woman stranded on a highway are some examples of timely help. This type of timely help is of immeasurable value to those who receive them. That is why Valluvar says that though the help rendered may be small, it is of greater value than the earth itself.

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11.3 Gratitude

Question:

How do we measure the excellence of help rendered without expecting anything in return?

Answer:

It is larger than the ocean if we weigh the excellence

of a benefit conferred without expecting anything return. (Couplet – 103)

பயன்தூக்கார் செய்த உதவி நயன்தூக்கின்

நன்மை கடலின் பெரிது.

(குறள் – 103)

Explanation:

The ocean does benefit the clouds by giving them water. But the clouds return the favor with rain, and the rainwater eventually goes back to the ocean. So, in a way, the ocean gets something in return for the benefit it does to the clouds. Therefore, when a benefit is conferred without any expectation of a return, it is in some sense, better than the benefit done by the ocean to the clouds. The excellence of a benefit is not really quantifiable. But, if it can somehow be quantified, the benefit done without expecting a return is greater than the benefit done by the ocean to the clouds.

Many years ago, when I was a graduate student in the USA at the University of Cincinnati, I went to India to meet my parents. While I was there, I got married. After the wedding, I wanted my wife to come with me to the USA. But the US Consulate in

Chennai refused to issue her a visa. After my return to the USA, through the Immigration and Naturalization Services, I was able to get a visa for my wife so that she could come to the USA. My wife was supposed to arrive at JFK Airport, New York, on a Friday evening in October. Since it was the first time she had traveled to the USA, I went to JFK Airport to meet her and accompany her to Cincinnati. On the day of her arrival, I was at JFK airport, ready to receive her. As expected, her plane arrived on time. But she did not come on that plane. I got a call from the Airline ticket counter asking me to come there. When I reached the counter, they told me that my wife could not come as scheduled. But she would come on Monday, provided I could meet her at JFK Airport. The Airline personnel told me they were supposed to send a Telex message to my people about my meeting her at JFK Airport on Monday.

I went to New York thinking that my wife would come, and we would both come to Cincinnati on the same day. I was not planning to stay in New York. At that time, I had two options. One option was to stay in New York till Monday, receive my wife, and return to Cincinnati with her. The other option was to go to Cincinnati and return to New York on Monday. As a student, I had limited income and could not afford either option. It suddenly occurred to me that I had a distant relative, and I could stay with him till Monday. I tried to call him. But I could not reach him. In the meantime, the Airline people kept asking me whether I would be at JFK Airport on Monday. I was confused, and I was almost at my wit's end.

At that moment, somebody patted me on my shoulder and said, "I heard your conversation with the Airline personnel. You look worried. Can I help you?" I told him my predicament. Immediately, he said to me that I could stay with him till Monday and

meet my wife at JFK Airport on Monday. I was hesitant to accept his hospitality and said, "Thank you. But I don't want to trouble you." He mentioned that it was not a problem and he wanted to help me at a time like that. I accepted the Good Samaritan's offer.

The man who helped me was an Indian gentleman named David from Tamil Nadu, and he was a Baptist Minister in New York. David was married to an American lady. The husband and wife were very kind and hospitable. I enjoyed my stay with them. On Monday, David's wife drove me to JFK airport and was with me till my wife's arrival. I was truly touched by the kindness and hospitality of David and his wife. Although I had never helped David in any way, he volunteered to help me. The help he offered me was timely. When I thanked him, he kept saying that what he did was a very small favor to a fellow countryman. It might have been a small thing for him. It was a tremendous help to me. Also, he helped me without expecting anything in return. I was in touch with him for a few years. Even after many years, I keep admiring and being enormously grateful for his tremendous help at a time when I was utterly at a loss as to what to do. This incidence illustrates all three types of help discussed in this and the two preceding blogs on Gratitude.

C Rajendiran: A Savant of Thirukkural

The metamorphosis of a Customs officer as a Tamil savant, narrated by Paul Nicodemus in the e-journal Dance India dated October 9,2022.



As a young and dynamic officer, Thiru C.Rajendiran worked in the customs department for 6 years and arrested 200 people. Then he moved to Delhi on promotion in Inspection Directorate. Later, he got back to the headquarters as a joint director in the Revenue Intelligence. Here, he had a satisfying stint for 3 years. He then spent some time with Delhi Customs Department. He was then picked up for a position in Singapore in the Customs for Overseas Intelligence Network. He worked in Singapore for four years on deputation to the foreign ministry. He oversaw proceeding in the South Asian

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region which included Australia and New Zealand apart from Asian countries, for customs cooperation.

While working as the head of the commercial side of the mission, his interest in Tamil got revived. Tamil was one of the official languages of Singapore apart from English and Mandarin. The country's population comprised 8 percent Indians and out of which 90 percent were Tamils. His frequent interactions with people made him have a re-look into Tamil literature. Confucius, who was considered the architect of modern civil services in China was widely quoted. Confucius took the ancient knowledge of China from the Golden period – the three emperors period and reinterpreted it for modern society. “Majority of the Chinese in Singapore drew inspiration from Confucius and then I thought why not Thiruvalluvar?” he says. Rajendiran looked into Thiruvalluvar teachings and his ancient wisdom of life. His time in Singapore gave him an opportunity to delve into the teachings of Thiruvalluvar and he developed a holistic view and a whole new dimension.

He found couplets written by Thiruvalluvar in Thirukkural to be pregnant with meaning. “Each couplet was like an atom with seven seas hidden inside it. A normal approach may not reveal its inner meaning,” he says. These couplets survived for over two millennia. When something survives 2000 years there ought to be truth in it. “I wanted to know the real meaning of these couplets. Truth alone triumphs,” he adds. He took one of the best commentaries on Thiruvalluvar, written by Parimelazhagar, a poet from Kanchipuram around 1250 AD. In the 13th Century, there were three universities in the region – Takshila, Kanchipuram and Nalanda. Out of the three Kanchipuram was believed to be the oldest and a seat of learning for all languages. Rajendiran wanted to

look into the teaching of Thirukkural with the help of Parimelazhagar commentaries. “Confucius on one side and our ancient Indian wisdom on the other side. I wanted to do a comparative study. But before that, I first wanted to understand Thirukkural and delved deep into it,” he says. In 2005, he went to Chennai on leave. He straight away visited Pondy Bazaar and picked up the old commentary and few other books to understand the commentary. He then did a comparative study. His innate passion to study and understand Tirukkural resulted in writing his first book titled **திருக்குறள் உவமை நயம்** (Thirukkural – Uvamai Nayam). In this book, he attempted to share his thoughts and reflections on the metaphors and similes used in Thirukkural in today's context. He released the book written in Tamil in September 2007. “Thiruvalluvar used several techniques to convey the message. Within two lines and a few words, he had to convey real meaning,” he says.

In 2009, something more profound came into his mind. He felt whatever he did so far was the tip of an iceberg – 238 couplets out of 1330. He thought only Metaphors and Similes would not help in understanding the complete meaning of Tirukkural. He had decided to study the entire work from the 700-year-old commentary. He segmented and wanted to come up with 10 different books on 10 aspects of Thirukkural.

After joining civil services, Rajendiran got married to Malarkodi in 1986. She is from his mother's hometown. She was a student of Sarada College in Selam, a college which taught great values besides academics. After marriage, in the case of a coincidence, she came home with a book on Thirukkural.

Thirukkural contains 133 chapters – 38 chapters on Righteousness, 70 chapters on how to deal with society and last 25 chapters are about love. In 2009, he told his wife they

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would leave the last set of chapters and write short stories of this land, short stories of today and short stories from real life based on the first 108 chapters. “The idea was to weave stories based on couplets from each chapter. When the reader reads the story, it should convey the message of the chapter. The story itself could be enacted or told to children. The tradition would go from one generation to the other,” he explains. His wife Malarkodi Rajendiran has written the book titled நிழல்காட்டுந்நிஜங்கள் (Nizhal Kaattum Nijangal) containing 124 stories conveying the essence of first 108 chapters of Thirukkural. The title translated to ‘Truth Through the Shadows’. She wrote it in 9 months. Their children then came up with an idea to add illustrations to these stories. They found an artist in Coimbatore and he read the stories and drew illustrations for all the 108 chapters. On the whole, the book had 124 stories. The publisher was happy to publish a 500-page book.

Around the same time, a friend of Rajendiran had come from Chennai to Coimbatore and advised him to write a book on the entire Thirukkural instead of several small books. “He told me, it was ageless wisdom and asked me to write a book on the entire thing. At that point of time, APJ Abdul Kalam’s classmate from St. Joseph’s College, Sampath Kumar suggested me to begin with friendship,” he says. He worked on the project and he took 7 years to complete it. He read books, got in touch with few scholars and worked on it whenever he found the time.

Simultaneously, he excelled in his profession as a servant of the Indian Revenue Service. “The government had a lot of confidence in me and my work. I was always designated as an executive commissioner. Had it been any other job, I would have had

more time to work on the book. I worked on the book on Saturdays and Sundays,” he says. He completed writing the book in November 2016.

He believes in destiny but he is not a prisoner of destiny. “I can craft my destiny,” he says. Destiny has taken him to Chennai where he finally had a work-life balance. It allowed him to continue his work on the book. Though, he finished writing the book, post processing work like proofreading and checking for cohesion and coherence needed his attention. Parallely, he had an encounter with a guru named Bala Subramanya Swamy and it had a positive effect on him. He received good guidance from the guru. Guru Balu initially worked as a driver for a company for 35 years and remained a bachelor. Even the next-door neighbour would not know about the greatness of this man as he never had a huge following. “As a divine intervention, the right people were brought into my life at the right time. I was apprehensive of reading the first chapter as it was the most important part and I was looking for a scholar. At that point of time, Srinivasamurthy, who retired from our department as an assistant commissioner came to me looking for an opportunity to work on the project and voluntarily offered to help – like a squirrel to Rama. But instead of being a squirrel, he became a pivotal member in my yagna,” he says.

He took one more year to fine tune the book. In the period, new ideas emerged, and he also incorporated them. After he considered the book to be ready, he gave it to Balasubramanian, Sahitya Akademi Award Coordinating Committee Member for Tamilnadu and he wrote a 10-page Foreword within two months. When everybody involved thought the book was ready, it took another two years to refine and add the third volume. Finally, the book, “Pamararukum Parimelazhagar” was launched in

December 2018. Three volumes of the book put together comprised 1088 pages. The book brought Parimelazhagar's work close to 21st Century society. Earlier, his work was exclusive for the scholars and this book opened a door for the common man to understand the wisdom of Thirukkural. "All the authors whoever worked on Thirukkural so far did it not to be at the forefront but to pass on the wisdom of the past to the next generation," he says.

Rajendiran has a Master's degree in Mathematics (1979) from Government Arts College, Salem, The University of Madras and gained two Bachelor Degrees one in Law (1993) with specialisation in Criminology and the other in Education (1981). Later he has also done PG Diploma Programme in International Business Operation (2002) from IGNOU, New Delhi and Patent Laws (2003) from NALSAR, Hyderabad. Immediately before assuming charge as Vice Chairman, he joined the Commission as Member, Settlement Commission, Chennai in November 2016. Immediately before that, he held the charge of Chief Commissioner of Customs, Central Excise and Service Tax, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. He worked in various capacities in major Custom Houses such as Kolkata, Chennai, New Delhi, Tuticorin and Visakhapatnam. As Commissioner Central Excise & Service Tax, Coimbatore, he successfully implemented Pilot Project on ACES (Automation of Central Excise and Service Tax). He worked for about 9 years in the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence at various levels both in the Zonal unit (Chennai) and in the Headquarters (New Delhi) and handled several cases relating to Cross Border Smuggling, Drug Trafficking, Commercial frauds relating to imports and exports. He was honoured with the Presidential Award of Appreciation Certificate for rendering 'Specially Distinguished Record of Service' on the occasion of Indian Republic Day 2003. From July 2003 he worked for four years as First Secretary

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(Commerce) in the High Commission of India, Singapore. During his tenure in Singapore, as Head of the Commercial Wing, he handled many Government, Business and Student delegations from India visiting Singapore and vice versa. He played a very important role as a Coordinator and a member of the negotiating team in the negotiation and conclusion of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) between India and Singapore, which was signed on 29th June 2005. He is working as the Vice Chairman, Settlement Commission, Customs, Central Excise and Service Additional Bench, Chennai, since June 2017. He is a Savant.

Rajendiran has been keen on sharing his experience with the young generation and has addressed over 2 Lakh School/College Students, Academicians and Representatives of Trade and Industry since 2007. He considers Thirukkural as an operating manual for meaningful, effective and joyful living. He firmly believes that the principles in Thirukkural lay a strong foundation to our life if only we understand the true meaning and practised it in our day-to-day life.



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Thiruvalluvar Era: 2053 –Aippasi-20

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“Ilakkuvanār was a multifaceted personality, who as a scholar, as a literary critic, as a grammarian, as a linguist, as a poet, as a journalist, as a translator and, above all, as a fierce fighter leading struggles and agitations without fearing imprisonment and loss of employment, made substantial contributions to the promotion of Tamil language, literature, culture and civilization. Unlike most of his junior and senior contemporary Tamil scholars, he was not simply an armchair theoretician writing books on the glory of Tamil but a heroic warrior never shying away from the battlefield” *Dr.P.Maruthanayagam*



17/11/1909 - 3/9/1973

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Anna on Ilakkuvanar's Tholkappiyam translation

STUPENDOUS is the word that arises spontaneously as one goes through this work an achievement worthy of the erudite scholar, Dr. Ilakkuvanar.

This is no mere translation of Tholkappiyam-the greatest, grandest and the most ancient Tamil work. Doctor Ilakkuvanar has given us a faithful portrayal of Tamilakam itself.

Tholkappiyam is the bed-rock on which a grand edifice of literature stands a literature about which, we Tamilians have got every right to be elated.

To translate such a work of fundamentals as Tholkappiyam, one needs a critical mind of high calibre and Doctor Ilakkuvanar has demonstrated this aspect in abundance.

Doctor Ilakkuvanar, is well-known already as a scholar of rare eminence, bold and unbiassed. Behind this work that Doctor Ilakkuvanar has given us, is enshrined years of intense study, critical analysis and comparative thought.

Doctor Ilakkuvanar has done yeoman service by rendering Tholkappiyam in the English language and the English knowing world will now be in a position to realise and appreciate the genius of ancient Tamilnad.

Tamilians have got every right to feel proud of Tholkappiyam and Doctor Ilakkuvanar's masterly work is bound to enable scholars of the English speaking world to evaluate correctly the heights attained by Tamilians, long long before many many nations attempted to perfect their languages.

Tamilians in particular and students of literature in general, owe a debt of gratitude to Doctor Ilakkuvanar for this work.

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It is not for me to enumerate the various aspects to be found in this work, nor is it possible to express fully our feelings of appreciation in a cursory way--enough to state that Tamilians are entitled to feel proud of this magnificent work. I am confident that those who appreciate the present-day spirit of renaissance in Tamil language, will make the fullest and most fruitful use of this masterpiece.

I pay my deep-felt thanks to Doctor Ilakkuvanar for having given us 'Tholkappiyam' in the English language.

CN. Annadurai

C.N. ANNADURAI M.A.,M.P.,)

[Reprint of Anna's foreword to Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar's translation of Tholkappiyam published on 1963)



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Ilakkuvanar's Thirukkural Mission: A Force for four decades (1933-1973)

Prof.S.Ilakkuvanar, an unsung hero in the battle against suppression of linguistic human rights, ever remains as an embodiment of Tamil heroism in the history of Tamilnadu. His role as an indomitable warrior in the fight against imposition of Hindi, domination of Sanskrit and aggressive encroachment of English in the fields of Education and administration deserve immediate attention of scholars for proper documentation, so as to record his due place in the annals of history.

While carrying on his crusade for the cause of Tamil on one hand he also strived his every nerve to propagate the maxims of Thiruvalluvar, the vivid portrayal of Tamil culture and civilization by sangam classics and the knowledge of Tholkappiyam as a classical treatise on Tamil language and literature.

His multifaceted personality as an orator, journalist, translator, poet and educationist helped him achieve his target.

At a very young age of 23, while he was a college student, Ilakkuvanar started his Thirukkural mission after a thorough reading of Thirukkural and its commentaries which compelled him to propagate this secular scripture for the benefit of the people. While he was a Vidwan intermediate student at Raja's college, Thiruvaiyaru (1933) he began his mission.

At weekends he went to the surrounding villages to propagate the lofty ideals of Thiruvalluvar. He willfully took this noble task of propagating Thirukkural so as to motivate the people to alleviate their worries and achieve progress in their lives.

He took a vow to carry on this propagation of Thirukkural throughout his life just like a Christian missionary, not expecting any benefit from this, but at the same time never to get afraid of any difficulties faced due to this preaching of Thirukkural. Till his demise at 1973 September 3, he had conducted thousands of Thirukkural classes on week-ends, hundreds of seminars and conferences at many places in Tamlnadu, to introduce, instruct and enlighten people on various aspects of Thirukkural.

He started his teaching career at the then Thanjavur District board high schools. From the very beginning of his career, he made it a custom to celebrate Thiruvalluvar day during Navrathri (dasara) holidays. During those days, Ilakkuvanar might be the only teacher to conduct Thiruvalluvar day as a public function with the co-ordination of students, teachers and parents. It never ended till his retirement. The venues changed but the spirit and enthusiasm to introduce Thirukkural and celebrate the magnanimity and genius of Thiruvalluvar never decreased. During those days only few people understood Ilakkuvanar's intention to propagate the ideals of Thiruvalluvar. As Ilakkuvanar was an ardent admirer and sincere follower of Periyar E.V.R., many persons with a paranoid approach misunderstood the meetings as a sort of propaganda for E.V.R.'s self-respect movement. When he authored and published a book titled, "Who is an able minister?", with an intention to explain the division of amaichuiyal (The chapter about ministers) in Thirukkural, paranoid onlookers thought Ilakkuvanar has

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criticized the congress ministers. Even without having a glance of the book, they sent telegrams to the Premier (Chief Minister) that Prof.S.Ilakkuvanar has done a great mistake by indulging in politics and blaming ministers. They went to the extent of demanding the dismissal of Ilakkuvanar from his Professor post.

The then Premier Kumaraswami Raja sent Rupees Two by Telegraphic Money order and requested to send the book immediately. A couple of days after the Premier received the book , he sent a letter to Prof.S.Ilakkuvanar, appreciating him for his analysis of Thirukkural in a new angle. Those who had sent telegrams and expected Ilakkuvanar's dismissal got disappointed. This event is mentioned to disclose the circumstance and sequence of the past under which Ilakkuvanar propagated Thirukkural.

Periyar hailed the Thirukkural as a valuable scripture which contained many scientific and philosophical truths. He also praised the secular nature of the work. Periyar praised Thiruvalluvar for his description of God as a formless entity with only positive attributes. He also suggested that one who reads the Thirukkural will become a Self-respecter, absorbing knowledge in politics, society, and economics. According to him, though certain items in this ancient book of ethics may not relate to today, it permitted such changes for modern society.

To popularize Thirukkural, he organized a two days conference at Chennai on 15/1/1949 and 16/1/1949 which was attended by all the eminent scholars of Tamil at Tamlnadu, irrespective of their political affiliations. Navalar Somasundara Bharatiyar, T.P.Meenakshisundaram, A.Chakravarthi nayanar, Thiru.Vi.Ka. Ka.Appadurai, Thirukkural V.Munusamy and Prof.S.Ilakkuvanar were among the participants.

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Ilakkuvanar appreciated the initiative of Periyar and requested him to conduct such conferences in all the districts of the then Madras state. Periyar accepted Ilakkuvanar's proposal to conduct such conferences in all the districts of the then Madras state, and he gave the opportunity to Ilakkuvanar to conduct in Ramnad district at Virudhunagar. He had founded a Thirukkural forum at Virudhunagar under the Presidentship of V.V.Ramasamy, his college correspondent. Ilakkuvanar mobilized a very larger gathering than the first conference and eminent scholars from all the parts of the then Madras state. The resolutions passed by Ilakkuvanar which got the approval and acceptance of the gathering were futuristic.

1) From high school up to college, Thirukkural should be compulsorily introduced as a compulsory subject. Shakespeare is prescribed as a full-fledged paper for degree courses at college and competitive examinations for government jobs. Just like Shakespeare, Thirukkural should be introduced in these examinations.

2) Legislators and Heads of Institutions should be well versed in Thirukkural. Scholarship in Thirukkural should be made an essential qualification to adorn these positions.

3) Government should take necessary steps to announce a day as Thiruvalluvar day and announce it as a public holiday.

4) This conference requests Thiruchirappalli All India Radio station to announce news about meetings and conferences on Thirukkural and broadcast the lectures.

The above resolutions wholeheartedly accepted by the scholars in the conference, which were considered as dreams of Ilakkuvanar then, have become realities.

The demand for the announcement of a specific day as Thiruvalluvar day has a long history, and that history cannot be narrated in a few pages. Kazhi.Siva.Kannuppila ad Va.subbiah founded a “Thiruvalluvar day academy” (Thiruvalluvar thirunaal kazhagam) to reiterate the need to fix a day for celebrating as Thiruvalluvar day. The role of Kaa.Po.Rathinam from Eezham should also be mentioned here. Eventhough a long debate was going on about a probable date, Tamil scholars decided to fix 2nd day of Thai (the day next to pongal) as Thiruvalluvar day. Thai first i.e. on Pongal, the Tamil New Year or Thiruvalluvar year begins.

Ilakkuvanar’s dream to introduce Thirukkural as a compulsory subject got a partial success as the then Education minister Avinashilingam introduced Thirukkural as a compulsory subject in High schools.

As per the verdict of Justice R.Mahadevan, from 6th standard to 12th standard Thirukkural was introduced as a compulsory subject and 108 chapters of Thirukkural (Araththuppaal and Porutpaal) were distributed class-wise so that a student entering High school should learn all the 108 chapters without fail.

In Malaysia, from 15th March 2015, Thirukkural was introduced in the syllabi of High schools and universities.

It is needless to elaborate the importance Thirukkural had gained today throughout the world.

International organizations like U.N., Indian national organizations like Parliament of India utilize Thirukkural at apt occasions.

Ilakkuvanar's prolonged propaganda of Thirukkural cannot be described within a few pages. But if a few examples are cited, it will be enough evidence.

Ilakkuvanar was the first scholar to give a series of lectures on Thirukkural. For one year he gave lectures on Thirukkural every Sunday at Pudukottai. This was during 1952 to 1953 by the efforts of Annalaar P.A. Subramaiyanaar, who, who founded a Thirukkural academy for this activity.

Periyar E.V.R. appreciated this new venture and told that only Mahabaratham and Ramayana enjoyed such publicity.

Ilakkuvanar was the only Professor to run a journal propagating Thirukkural. He conducted a fortnightly named KuralNeri in Tamil as well as in English. KuralNeri was also published as a daily newspaper for six years from June 1966 to December 1966. It was edited and published by

The only English fortnightly for spreading Thirukkural was edited and published by Dr.S. Ilakkuvanar and now the mission continues through this publication.

Thirukkural-Questions and Answers



-Thirukkuralaar R.Prabhakaran

11.4 Gratitude

Question:

Should we always remember a good deed done to us by others?

Answer:

It is improper to forget the good deeds done to us. But it is good to forget the bad deeds at once. (Couplet - 108)

நன்றி மறப்பது நன்றன்று; நன்றல்லது

அன்றே மறப்பது நன்று.

(குறள் – 108)

Explanation:

If we do a good deed to someone, and if they forget, we would not like that. On the other hand, if those to whom we did good deeds remember them and respond to us with kindness, it will encourage us to do more good deeds. So, we should never forget a good act done to us.

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I remember to have read a story about a boy who remembered a good deed. That story is about a young boy who had a paper route. He was distributing local newspapers to the residents of his town. He was walking and distributing the paper. He felt that he could distribute papers to more people and increase his income if he had a bike. But he did not have the money to buy a bike. He approached several local banks for a loan of hundred dollars so that he could buy a bike. All the bank managers refused to grant him the loan because he had no collateral. Finally, the manager of a very small bank called Thrifty Bank was kind enough to give the boy a hundred dollars loan. The boys used that money to buy a bike, and from the additional income, he repaid the loan in a short time. Years passed by. The bank manager who lent the money forgot all about the incident.

After almost thirty years later, one day, a middle-aged man walked into the Thrifty Bank's manager's office and told him he wanted to deposit a check in the bank. When the manager saw the check, he was shocked and surprised. The check was for ten million dollars. The bank manager asked the visitor, "This is a very small bank, and I am surprised that you want to deposit this large sum of money in this bank. May I ask you why?" The visitor replied, "Sir, you may not remember me. When I was a little boy, I wanted a hundred dollars loan to buy a bike. All the other banks in town refused to give me the loan. But you gave me the loan. I never forgot that. Now, I am the Chief Financial Officer in a large corporation. I have all the confidence in you that you will make good use of this money to help many people. By remembering the good deed done by the bank manager, the visitor made the manager happy, and he was also delighted.

If a bad deed is done to us, it is better to forget that as soon as possible. By remembering the bad deed, we get annoyed and angry. We are also tempted to get even with the one who did the bad deed. Remembering a bad deed results in more bad deeds. So, Valluvar's advice is not to forget the good deeds and forget the bad deeds as soon as possible. Like Valluvar, the Chinese philosopher Confucius also says, "Forget injuries; never forget kindness."

12.1 Honesty

Question:

What to do with ill-gotten gains?

Answer:

However useful, ill-gotten wealth should be discarded at once. (Couplet – 113)

நன்றே தரினும் நடுவிகந்தாம் ஆக்கத்தை
அன்றே யொழிய விடல்.

(குறள் – 113)

Explanation:

In the state of Tamil Nadu, during the period 1947 to 1949, there was a Chief Minister by the name Omandur Ramasamy Reddiyar. He was a very honest man. There was an incident in his life that bears testimony to his impeccable honesty. Once, he went on a tour and stayed in a government guesthouse and returned to his residence. Upon his return, his driver was unloading the luggage from the trunk of his car. Mr. Reddiyar found that the driver was bringing in a jackfruit. He asked the driver where he got the jackfruit. The driver replied, "Sir, while we stayed at the government guest house, the watchman gave this fruit." Mr. Reddiyar said, "The fruit belongs to the government guest house, and I am not supposed to get it." He told the driver to take the jackfruit back to the guesthouse. The jackfruit was not worth much. Probably it was worth less than a dollar. To him, it was a matter of principle that he should not take anything that did not legitimately belong to him.

A similar incident happened in Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr. C.N. Annudurai's life also. Mr. C. N. Annadurai was affectionately called as Anna. Immediately after becoming the Chief

Minister, Anna moved to Chennai while his wife was still staying in his home in Kanchipuram, which is about 45 miles from Chennai. Anna's house in Kanchipuram was not well furnished. The furniture in his house was old and damaged. While Anna was in Chennai, a businessman filled his house with new furniture. Anna's wife thought it was government-supplied furniture because her husband had become the Chief Minister. When Anna came to Kanchipuram to visit his wife, he was surprised to see all the new and elegant furniture. He asked his wife about the furniture. She said, "Somebody brought all this furniture. I thought the government has furnished our house because you have become the Chief Minister." Upon further inquiry, Anna found that it was a gift from a local businessman. Anna immediately called the businessman and asked him to remove all the furniture supplied by him.

These are just two examples of incidents in the lives of two extremely honest men. These examples are worthy of emulation by others when they end up with ill-gotten gains.

13.1 Self-restraint

Question:

Should everyone be humble?

Answer:

Self-restraint will place one among the gods. Lack of it will plunge him into hell. (Couplet – 121)

Humility is certainly good for all. It is an added asset to the wealthy. (Couplet – 125)

அடக்கம் அமரருள் உய்க்கும் அடங்காமை
ஆரிருள் உய்த்து விடும். (குறள் – 121)
எல்லார்க்கும் நன்றாம் பணிதல் அவருள்ளும்

Explanation:

The words 'humble' and 'humility' have the same meaning. The term 'humble' is an adjective, whereas the term 'humility' is a noun. Some people may have humility as an inborn quality, whereas others may develop humility through their upbringing. Even if one does not have humility, one can develop it on their own through their own self-restraint. It is always good to be humble. Just like kindness and compassion, humility is a great virtue to possess. Valluvar says that those who have humility will be among the gods, and those who do not have humility will go to hell. We do not have to take these statements literally. Couplet 121 says that those who have humility will be benefited from it, and those who do not have humility will meet with unpleasant consequences.

Though everyone should have humility, humility is an added asset to those who are rich (Couplet – 125). If a rich man is arrogant, he will lose the respect and cooperation of others. That will have an adverse effect on his wealth. On the other hand, if he is humble, he will gain affection and admiration from his employees, associates, and acquaintances. This is not only true for the rich but also for people in high positions.

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India, was a man of extreme humility. His humility gained him enormous respect and admiration from everyone. Once I had the opportunity to meet him in his office. When I entered his office, he stood up and greeted me. He was very humble in his demeanor. He paid keen attention to what I was saying, and he listened very patiently. When the meeting was over, and I took leave of him, he got up and walked along with me to the front of Rashtrapathi Bhavan (the official residence of the President of India) and bid me goodbye. His demeanor touched me, and the incident has increased my admiration for Dr. A.P. J. Abdul Kalam.

13.2 Self-restraint

Question:

What is wrong with using a harsh word at someone?

Answer:

The injury resulting from a burn heals, but not the scar that is caused by an offending word.

(Couplet – 129)

தீயினாற் சுட்டபுண் உள்ளாறும் ஆறாதே

நாவினாற் சுட்ட வடு.

(குறள் – 129)

Explanation:

When we have a physical injury, it eventually heals, and once the wound heals, it no longer bothers us. But if someone speaks to us using harsh words, the thought that they used harsh words remains in our minds for a long time, like a scar that remains forever even after the wound heals. The incident at which the harsh words were used and the actual words used never disappear from our minds. Whenever we recall the incident, we tend to resent the incident and be angry at the person who used those offending words. We may even feel like getting even with the offender. Such a feeling is not conducive to our own peace of mind. Therefore, it is always a good practice to use pleasant words when we speak to others.

14. 1 Right Conduct

Question:

What is right conduct?

Answer:

It is part of wisdom to conform to the ways of the world.

(Couplet – 426)

Those who fail to conduct themselves in harmony with the world
are ignorant despite their vast learning.

(Couplet - 140)

எவ்வ துறைவது உலகம் உலகத்தோடு

அவ்வ துறைவ தறிவு.

(குறள் - 426)

உலகத்தோடு ஒட்ட ஒழுகல் பலகற்றும்

கல்லார் அறிவிலா தார்.

(குறள் - 140)

Explanation:

According to Valluvar, right conduct is what is determined as the right conduct by the world. But there are no uniform standards for right conduct in the world. However, different countries and cultures have their own codes of conduct. Therefore, it makes sense to interpret the word “world” as that part of the world where one lives instead of the whole world. Further, what was considered the right conduct in the past may not be regarded as the proper conduct at present. For example, child marriages were not unusual in India about two centuries ago. Now, it is against the law, and therefore, it is not right conduct for someone to marry a child. Also, in India, widow re-marriage was unacceptable in the past. Today, it is not uncommon. In the past, having a child out of wedlock was considered shameful and unacceptable by American society. As of 2008, about 40.6 percent of children were born out of wedlock, and their number is increasing. So, right conduct is a function of the community where one lives and the time in which one lives. Valluvar is of the opinion that those who do not live in harmony with the world are ignorant despite their vast learning.

14.2 Right Conduct

Question:

What happens if someone does not follow the norms of proper conduct?

Answer:

Men obtain greatness from the propriety of conduct. The impropriety of
conduct results in untold disgrace. (Couplet – 137)

ஒழுக்கத்தின் எய்துவர் மேன்மை இழுக்கத்தின்
எய்துவர் எய்தாப் பழி. (குறள் -137)

Explanation:

Those who do not follow rules of proper conduct will sooner or later end up with blame for their behavior. There are many examples of people who ended up in disgrace despite all their remarkable achievements. In recent memory, there have been two US presidents who ended up in disgrace. It is not easy to become the most powerful man and the leader of the free world. So far, in the history of the world there have been only 46 people who have risen to the elevated and the most respected position of US president. Two of them slipped from proper conduct despite their phenomenal achievements and ended up in disgrace of historic proportion.

One of them was Richard Nixon, the 37th president of the United States of America. In many respects, President Nixon was an able administrator. He ended the American involvement in the [war in Vietnam](#) in 1973, brought home the American [prisoners of war](#), and ended the [military draft](#). [Nixon's visit to China](#) in 1972 eventually led to [diplomatic relations between the two nations](#), and he initiated [détente](#) and the [Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty](#) with the Soviet Union in the same year. He enforced the [desegregation](#) of Southern schools, established the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), and began the [War on Cancer](#). He was re-elected in one of the largest electoral [landslides](#) in U.S. history in [1972](#) when he defeated [George McGovern](#). But despite all these accomplishments, he got himself involved in the Watergate scandal. His 1972 re-election campaign involved the break-in and wiretapping at the Democratic National Committee's (DNC's) headquarters at the Watergate office complex in Washington, D.C. Nixon and his administration were involved in the cover-up, and Nixon himself was not very truthful. As a result of Nixon's cover-up and illegal activities, he was investigated and was about to be impeached. He resigned before the actual impeachment proceedings.

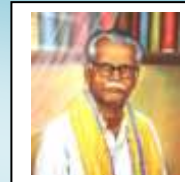
Another example of a man in a very powerful position who disgraced himself was President Bill Clinton, the 42nd president of the United States of America. Clinton presided over the longest period of peacetime economic expansion in American history. He passed the Welfare Reform Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program. He was very popular and maintained a very high favorable rating throughout his presidency. But his extramarital activities landed him in trouble. He was investigated and found guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice in a sex scandal case. He was impeached by the House of Representatives and was later acquitted by the US +Senate. Thus, a powerful man with a brilliant record of accomplishments ended in disgrace because of a lack of moral character.

These are examples that should warn others that slipping from proper conduct will eventually lead to disgrace.



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VIT recalls contributions of scholars at birth anniv fete

CHENNAI: Tamil scholars Ki Aa Pe Viswanatham's 124th birth anniversary and 114th birth anniversary C. Ilakkuvanar were celebrated at the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) Chennai campus. The event was jointly arranged by the Tamil Iyakkam and VIT, Chennai.

VIT chancellor and Tamil Iyakkam founder president C. Viswanathan chaired the event and the office-bearers of Tamil Iyakkam took part in the ceremony.

Addressing the gathering, Viswanathan said, "The reason two scholars are

remembered for so many years is because of their service to Tamil and its people, which the public should read."

He further said that former CM M. Karunanidhi, CPI leader R. Nallakannu, Tamil writer Pa. Jayaprakasam, and former speakers Kalimuthu and Sedapatti Muthaiah were the disciples of Ilakkuvanar and they learned a lot from the scholar.

Tamil Iyakkam is feeling proud to celebrate the birthdays of these two scholars. Tamil Iyakkam was founded not just for the development of the Tamil language but also for the development of Tamils," Viswanathan added.



The event being inaugurated at VIT Chennai campus on Thursday

He further recalled that Tamil Iyakkam constituted a committee to explore the possibilities to devise a framework for the economical upliftment of Tamils.

K. Srikanth of the Indian National Educational Institute and Dr. Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar also addressed the ceremony.

Srikanth said Viswanatham voiced against the injustices. "Viswanatham stressed that superstitious thoughts will never help anyone to achieve big and hard work is the reason behind the success of everyone," he added.

Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar praised the qualities of Ilakkuvanar and hard work to safeguard Tamil literature.

Ki Aa Pe Viswanatham's 124th birth anniversary and 114th birth anniversary of C. Ilakkuvanar

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–DT Next dt.18/11/2022

Thirukkural-Questions and Answers



-Thirukkuralaar R.Prabhakaran

14.3 Right Conduct

Question:

Is right conduct really important?

Answer:

Since right conduct leads to eminence, it should be preserved more carefully than life itself.

(Couplet - 131)

ஒழுக்கம் விழுப்பம் தரலான் ஒழுக்கம்

உயிரினும் ஓம்பப் படும்.

(குறள் – 131)

Explanation:

Valluvar says that one should consider right conduct more important than life itself. When it comes to the question of whether one should protect his life at the expense of right conduct, Valluvar's answer is that right conduct is more important than life. This may be a tall order to follow for many people. But there are people who consider right conduct more important than life

and are ready to follow right conduct even at the expense of their life. The four Chaplains on the US ship Dorchester considered saving others' life more important than their own.

During World War II, the US ship SS Dorchester was struck by a submarine's torpedo and started to sink. The lives of the people in the ship were in grave danger. Lieutenants George Fox, Alexander Goode, John Washington, and Clark Poling were chaplains of varying faiths who were stationed in the sinking ship, the Dorchester. When the ship started to sink, the chaplains quickly rallied the troops together, handing out life jackets and directing people to safety. When the supply of life jackets ran out, they selflessly gave away their own life jackets. Then, the chaplains joined hands, said prayers, and sang hymns as they went down with the ship. The Four Chaplains are also sometimes referred to as the "Immortal Chaplains" or the "Dorchester Chaplains" In order to commemorate their brave and selfless sacrifice, in 1948, the United States Postal Service issued a three cents stamp. There is no doubt that the four chaplains valued helping others to survive as more important than their own lives. Like the chaplains, there are countless other examples of people taking life-threatening risks to save others who are in trouble. These are people who value right conduct more than their own precious lives. **15.1 Adultery**

Question:

Is it not adultery a despicable act?

Answer:

Enmity, sin, fear, and disgrace will never leave those
who lust after another man's wife.

(Couplet – 146)

The character of restraining from having adulterous
intention at another man's wife is really the outstanding
virtue of a righteous man.

(Couplet – 148)

பகைபாவம் அச்சம் பழியென நான்கும்

இகவாவாம் இல்லிறப்பான் கண்.

(குறள் – 146)

பிறன்மனை நோக்காத பேராண்மை சான்றோர்க்கு

அறனொன்றோ ஆன்ற வொழுக்கு.

(குறள் – 148)

Explanation:

Enmity, sin, fear, and disgrace are always the concomitants of those engaged in adulterous behavior. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." is one of the Ten Commandments decreed by God to Moses. Many religions condemn adultery as unacceptable and despicable behavior. In some societies, adultery is a punishable crime. According to Valluvar, the right conduct for a man of virtue is not even thinking of having an adulterous relationship with another man's wife. We can find a similar statement in the Bible (Matthew. 5:27-28), which says, "I say unto you, whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in the heart."

16.1 Forbearance**Question:**

What to do when someone hurts us with their words or deeds?

Answer:

Like the earth that supports even those who dig it, it is the supreme virtue to be patient with those who scorn you.

(Couplet - 151)

Retaliation gives only momentary joy. But forbearance gives everlasting glory.

(Couplet - 156)

Forgetting the transgressions of others is even better than forbearance.

(Couplet – 152)

அகழ்வாரைத் தாங்கும் நிலம்போலத் தம்மை

இகழ்வார்ப் பொறுத்தல் தலை

(குறள் – 151)

பொறுத்தல் இறப்பினை என்றும் அதனை

மறத்தல் அதனினும் நன்று.

(குறள் – 152)

ஒறுத்தார்க்கு ஒருநாளை இன்பம் பொறுத்தார்க்குப்

பொன்றுந் துணையும் புகழ்.

(குறள் – 156)

Explanation:

The words “forbearance” and “patience” are considered synonyms. But they do not mean exactly the same thing. Forbearance is patient self-control, restraint, and tolerance under provocation, while patience is the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting

angry or upset. In other words, forbearance implies patience under provocation, while patience is simply the capacity to tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering where there is no provocation involved. When confronted with insults and harmful actions against us by others, our most natural reaction is to retaliate. Valluvar says it is better to exercise self-control and tolerate their misbehavior. In other words, he recommends forbearance as the preferred approach. Retaliation will lead to more ill feelings and even violence. Retaliation may provide temporary satisfaction, whereas forbearance will give us lasting happiness and fame. Valluvar cites the earth as an example of forbearance because it supports even those who dig it. An example of extraordinary forbearance can be seen in the Bible. When Jesus Christ was crucified, he prayed to God and asked Him to forgive those who crucified him (Luke 23:34). According to Marcus Aurelius (121 AD – 180 AD), the Roman emperor, “The best revenge is not to copy him who wronged you (Marcus Aurelius, Book VI-6).” Valluvar goes one step ahead of Marcus Aurelius and suggests that forgetting the transgressions of others is even better than forbearance. The question is “Is forbearance really practical?” and “Can everyone follow Valluvar’s advice?” If we are determined and committed to following the path of virtue, though it is difficult, it is not impossible to follow this advice of Valluvar.

17.1 Envy

Question:

Should envy be avoided?

Answer:

Freedom from envious thoughts is the most righteous conduct. (Couplet – 161)

Thoughts and deeds free of envy, greed, anger, and harsh words alone,
constitute virtue. (Couplet – 35)

ஒழுக்காறாக் கொள்க ஒருவன்தன் நெஞ்சத்து

அழுக்காறு இலாத இயல்பு.

(குறள் – 161)

அழுக்காறு அவாவெகுளி இன்னாச்சொல் நான்கும்

இழுக்கா இயன்றது அறம்.

(குறள் – 35)

Explanation:

Envy is defined as a feeling of discontent or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions. According to psychologists, there are two kinds of envies: the benign kind and the malicious kind. Benign envy is healthy, and it motivates an individual to work hard and obtain those things that he desires. On the other hand, malicious envy is unhealthy, and it leads to indignation, frustration, resentment, and anger. As a result, the one with malicious envy may not get what he desires. According to Valluvar, malicious envy is inconsistent with virtue. He lists malicious envy first when he says that envy, greed, anger, and harsh words are the four evils that are inconsistent with virtue. So, envy should definitely be avoided since it is incompatible with virtue and leads to indignation, frustration, resentment, and anger.

Architectonics of the Kural

-Justice S.Maharajan



Justice. S.Maharajan was born in the year 1913 at Trichirappalli, Tamil Nadu. A scholar in Tamil and English, a staunch votary of Tamil music, Thiru S.Maharajan joined the State judiciary in 1943, after practicing as an advocate for eight years, and was elevated to the High Court of Madras in September 1969. After retirement, he was Chairman of the State Official Languages (Legislative) Commission, of the Expert Committee to promote translation of foreign classics into Tamil and vice-versa and of the Archaka's Committee to go into the question of appointment of archakas. As the Chief of the judicial service in Pondicherry for four years, Mr.Maharajan was responsible for the introduction of Indian legal system in the erstwhile French courts. Among the 15 books authored by him are translations of Shakespeare's works. His English monograph on Kamban and Thiruvalluvar were published by the Sahithya Akademi. Apart from his mastery of Kamba Ramayanam, he had been lecturing on the mysticism of Saint Tirumoolar. He was the president of the Tamil Isai Sangam. .(Maharajan passed away on September 9, 1982.)

It is fascinating to study the architectonics of the Kural, which consists of 133 Chapters of 10 Kurals each. These 133 chapters themselves are classified under three broad headings. The first heading is Arattu Pal, that is to say, the book relating to Aram or duty and it consists of 380 Kurals. The second is Porut Pal or the book relating to wealth and it consists of 700 Kurals. The third and the last is Kamathu Pal or the book relating to sexual love and it consists of 250 Kurals. Most critics approach the Kural on the unproved assumption that it is founded on the Sanskritic concept of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Those, who have been propounding this theory, have been hard put to explain why Tiruvalluvar omitted to deal with Moksha (Liberation), of which the Tamil equivalent is Veedu. A Christian Missionary was so cynical as to say that Tiruvalluvar did not deal with Moksha or Veedu, perhaps because he thought that the Tamil people were not prepared for the highest. Some others have explained the omission by saying that Veedu was not specifically dealt with because it would arise as a natural sequence to

the practice of Aram, Porul and Kamam as expounded by Tiruvalluvar. G.U. Pope wondered if Tiruvalluvar refrained from any exposition of Veedu or Moksha because he resolved to take only the practical view of things. He also supposed that Valluvar was not perhaps satisfied with the glimpses he had obtained of man's future and consequently, waited for the light. The proper inference to draw is that Tiruvalluvar's classification was based on different principles altogether from those in the Sanskritic classification. The content of Aram, as expounded by Tiruvalluvar, is radically different from that of Dharma as expounded in the Dharma Sastras. Tiruvalluvar does not, like the Dharmasastras, prescribe different Arams for different castes. His concept of Aram is universal in character. He prescribes different duties for the same individual as he passes through different stages of evolution. He prescribes the duties of an individual, as a member of his family, in relation to his parents, wife and children, and as a member of his community, in relation to his fellow members of the community, good, bad and indifferent, and as a citizen of the State, in relation to the ruler of the State. In all these relationships, he is required to manifest loving thought and indulge in right action. It would thus be seen that the Aram of Tiruvalluvar connotes a purely Tamilian concept which has little in common with the Sanskritic concept of Dharma.

The Porut Pal of Tiruvalluvar does not parallel the Artha concept of Sanskrit either. Unlike the Artha Sastra, which deals mainly with the art of Government, only a few chapters in Porut Pal deal with the art of Government and with sovereignty, and whenever references are made in the Kural to the King, it is to a King without any divine right, a King who is required never to swerve from virtue and who is expected to refrain from vice. The sovereign is portrayed as an embodiment of the ideals and virtues of the people. Several chapters have been devoted in this section to the self-respect, the truthfulness, the good character and honour of the citizen and the special virtues required for preserving and improving inter-personal relationships in the social polity. It is important to note that Valluvar, after discussing in the first book, the inner spiritual growth of the individual, proceeds to discuss in the second book on Porul, the public life of such an individual, visa-vis Society. Evidently, it is the concept of Tiruvalluvar that only a man, who has demonstrated by his moral, cultural and spiritual ripeness, his value as an individual, is fit to enter

the wider arena of public life and play a fruitful role therein. It will thus be found that the Porut Pal of Valluvar is infused with the spirit of secularism and social ethics, which are a far cry from the divine right theory of sovereignty and the Varnashrama Dharma.

Turning to the third book on Kamathu Pal, it is utterly different in content from the Kama Sastras of Sanskrit. It is divided into two sub-sections, Kalavial and Karpial. Kalavial refers to a marital union unaccompanied by any ritual or sacrament, and preceded by pre-marital love. This is something which is uniquely Tamilian.

Karpial refers to marital love. Unlike the Kama Sastras, which deal with an objective and scientific analysis of sex and sexual poses, Kamathu Pal of Tiruvalluvar contains a highly poetic exposition of the love between man and woman in its multitudinous aspects and set in different dramatic and lyrical situations. Never before in the literature of the world has the emotion of sexual love been expounded in such diverse fullness or with such penetrating insight.

Himself happily married, Valluvar derived a serene satisfaction from drawing tender portraits of lovers. He asks:—

Can wine, which intoxicates only when drunk,
intoxicate, like love, at mere sight? (Kural No. 1090)

His lover longs to singe himself in the fire of his beloved, and what kind of fire is it?

Tiruvalluvar's lover is baffled and perplexed by this fire:—

If I withdraw from her,
it burns me
if I go close to her, it cools me;
whence did she obtain this mysterious fire! (1104)

It will thus be seen that there is no parallelism between the Kama Sastras of Sanskrit and the Kamathu Pal of Tirukkural. It is wrong, therefore, to assume that the Aram, Porul and Inbam classification of Valluvar is in any manner patterned upon or akin to the Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha classification of Sanskrit and further to assume that for some unexplained reason, Tiruvalluvar omitted to deal in a separate section with Moksha or spiritual emancipation. It seems clear that Tiruvalluvar was more concerned with living fully and richly in the Eternal Now than with

metaphysical speculations about the uncertain future. It is not as if he failed to cater to the needs of the human spirit. His chapters in Arathu Pal on possession of spiritual grace, abstinence from meat, non-killing, performance of penance, truthfulness, renunciation, eradication of desire and the realization of the Ultimate Truth, give a clear spiritual conation to the secular life of the individual, and would have the effect of bringing Heaven down to the Earth and making egoless bliss a present reality instead of a distant dream.

He says in one Kural:—

He, who lives on the earth, in the manner he should,
will be placed among the gods dwelling in Heaven. (50)

Tiruvalluvar regarded spiritual bliss as a state of consciousness to be achieved Here and Now and not Hereafter. He, therefore, takes the reader gently by the hand through the various stages of his inner and outer developments until in Chapters 35 to 37 of Arathu Pal, he directly deals with the highest illumination, which releases men from pain and pleasure, birth and death. He says:—

From whatsoever you detach yourself
you become free from the pain it can cause. (341)

He, who cuts off the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', enters a world
superior to that of the celestials. (346)

In Kural No. 350, he advocates attachment to God for overcoming attachment to the things of the world:—

Attach yourself to him, in order that
you may detach yourself from all attachment.

He adds:—

To the clear-sighted, who have rid themselves of doubts,
Heaven is nearer than Earth. (353)

In the Chapter on Mei Unarthal (Awareness of Reality) he
says:—

Darkness vanishes from, and rapture descends upon
the men of spotless vision,

who have extricated themselves from illusion. (352)

Valluvar propounds the theory that those who are bound by attachment and desire have no real freedom, though they delude themselves into thinking they are free. In Kural No. 365, he proclaims:—

The free are those who are free from desire;
the others are never completely free.

In Kural No. 369, the sage gives the assurance:—

Here on this Earth itself you will enjoy unceasing rapture,
if you destroy desire, which is the woe of woes.

He winds up the Chapter on Avavaruthal (Liquidation of Desire):—

Achieve a condition in which all insatiate desire is rooted out;
in that very condition immortality will be conferred upon you. (370)

It will thus be seen that Tiruvalluvar omitted to write a separate book on Moksha, because, in his vision, Heaven and Earth were not separate compartments, and right earthly conduct could ensure immediate Heavenly bliss, because there was a brotherly nearness of Earth to Heaven.

Turning to the meaning of the word ‘Tirukkural’, ‘Tiru’ means ‘holy’ and ‘Kural’ means ‘anything short’. Each Kural is a couplet, the first line having four metric feet and the second line having three. This kind of couplet is called Kural Venba in Tamil. Venba is a metrical piece consisting of four lines. It is admitted on all hands that it is the most difficult form in which to compose poetry. The Kural, which is a dwarfed Venba, puts even greater restraints upon its practitioner. “Vers Libre”, which is the anti-thesis of the Kural, has been compared to playing tennis with the net down. The “Vers Libertines” by breaking loose from the restrictive influence of metre have sustained a conspicuous loss in the power and capacity of verbal expression. Valluvar, on the other hand, wilfully submitted himself to the tyranny of the specially evolved Kural metre, and by mastering it, achieved maximum tension between matter and form; he supercharged words with meaning by indulging in a kind of concentrated verbal yoga.

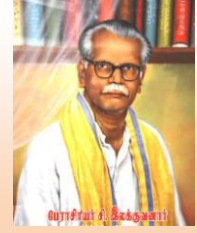
The Kural is not a “clanging couplet” like Alexander Pope’s, for there are no pompous drum-beats in it. Here poetry had become no rhyming rivulet of gay garrulity but a work of intense and compact art as painstakingly carved as the figures on the rock temples of Mamallapuram. The rhythm of the Kural is rather restrained and noble, sparkling with bold thought and sprightly style. The Kural is not a mechanically sliced inorganic thing. It is rather like a perfectly coordinated organism, which has been alive and kicking for 2000 years.

No wonder, not even Kambar himself has equalled Valluvar in gathering infinite riches in a little nutshell. Here in 1330 couplets are more memorable lines than in any equal area of literature in any language known to the writer. G.U. Pope was right to say in his introduction to his translations of the Kural, “Nothing, not even a corrupt Greek chorus, so defies the efforts of the student as does very much of the high Tamil poetry. The poetical dialect of Tamil allows every kind of ellipsis, so that a line is often little less than a string of crude forms artfully fitted together. The best compositions are quatrains or couplets each containing a complete idea, a moral epigram. Their construction resembles that of a design in mosaic. The materials fitted together are sometimes mere bits of coloured glass, but sometimes also very precious stones and pure gold. And the design? Why, you walk round it and try to catch it in all lights and feel at first, and often for a long time, as if it meant nothing at all, till you catch some hint, and at once it lies revealed, something to be thought of again and again, some bit of symbolism, it may be, not infrequently grotesque, often quaint, but sometimes also of rare beauty.”



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Thirukkural:Questions and answers

-Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran



18.1 Avoiding Covetousness

Question:

Why covetousness is considered evil?

Answer:

If a man abandons rectitude and covets another's property, it will ruin his family and lead to crimes. (Couplet – 171)

The very thought of stealing others' wealth by fraudulent means is evil. (Couplet – 282)

நடுவின்றி நன்பொருள் வெஃகின் குடிபொன்றிக்
குற்றமும் ஆங்கே தரும். (குறள் – 171)

உள்ளத்தால் உள்ளலும் தீதே பிறன்பொருளைக்
கள்ளத்தால் கள்வேம் எனல். (குறள் – 282)

Explanation:

Our thoughts precede our words and deeds. Once the thought of coveting another man's property occurs in our minds, then most probably, it will lead to stealing. Stealing is a punishable crime. If a man is involved in stealing and punished for that, it will affect him and his family. If there is no opportunity actually to steal the desired property, then frustration sets in. For these reasons, covetousness is considered evil. So, it is better not to entertain even the thought of coveting another man's property. The Bible says that a covetous person brings trouble to his family (Proverbs 15:27). Also, the tenth commandment in the Ten Commandments says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his

maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is thy neighbor's." Similar statements condemning covetousness can be found in other religions as well.

19.1 Backbiting

Question:

Is backbiting really a bad habit?

Answer:

Even if you say unkind words in a man's presence, do not utter slanderous words about him behind his back without thinking about the consequences. (Couplet – 184)

கண்ணின்று கண்ணறச் சொல்லினும் சொல்லற்க
முன்னின்று பின்னோக்காச் சொல். (குறள் – 184)

Explanation:

Backbiting is malicious talk about someone who is not present. When a person talks badly about someone in their absence, the listeners are likely to conclude that that person might talk about them too in the same manner in their absence. So, a person involved in backbiting is likely to lose his friends, be labeled a slanderer, and damage his reputation. Depending upon the severity of what is said, it may even be considered slander or defamation. Defamation is a punishable crime in many countries. So, backbiting is genuinely a bad habit, and one should not indulge in it. For this reason, Valluvar says even if you say unpleasant things in front of a person, never say anything bad about him behind his back without thinking about the consequences.

20.1 Idle Talk

Question:

What is wrong with idle talk?

Answer:

Everyone will condemn him who utters empty words displeasing others. (Couplet – 191)

He who indulges in empty words is not a man but chaff among men. (Couplet – 196)

Always utter fruitful words; never utter futile words.

(Couplet – 200)

பல்லார் முனியப் பயனில் சொல்லுவான்

எல்லாரும் எள்ளப் படும். (குறள் – 191)

பயனில்சொல் பாராட்டு வாளை மகன்னெல்

மக்கட் பதடி யெனல். (குறள் – 196)

சொல்லுக சொல்லிற் பயனுடைய சொல்லற்க

சொல்லிற் பயனிலாச் சொல். (குறள் – 200)

Explanation:

Valluvar considers lying, using harsh words, backbiting, and speaking vain words as four sins committed by one's speech. Speaking vain and useless words wastes everybody's time, displeases others, and damages the speaker's reputation. Chaff is the seed coverings and is considered worthless compared to the seed. A person speaking vain words has no meaningful content in his speech, and therefore, he is like chaff without the grain. Speaking useless words does not benefit anyone. Therefore, when one speaks, he should convey something worth listening to by others, and if he has nothing worth saying, he should keep quiet.

21.1 Fear of Evil

Question:

Should we always be afraid of doing evil deeds?

Answer:

One must fear evil more than fire,

as one evil leads to another evil. (Couplet – 202)

Ruin follows evil doers like a man's shadow

follows his footsteps. (Couplet – 208)

If you love yourself, refrain from doing any evil to others.

(Couplet – 209)

தீயவை தீய பயத்தலால் தீயவை

தீயினும் அஞ்சப் படும். (குறள் – 202)

தீயவை செய்தார் கெடுதல் நிழல்தன்னை

வீயாது அடிஉறைந் தற்று. (குறள் – 208)

தன்னைத்தான் காதல னாயின் எனைத்தொன்றும்

துன்னற்க தீவினைப் பால். (குறள் – 209)

Explanation:

One who does evil to others will always face evil

consequences. Nothing good will ever come out of doing evil to others. If we come in contact with fire, it will undoubtedly hurt us. Although fire tends to hurt, sometimes it is beneficial. But there is nothing beneficial in doing an evil deed.

Therefore, one should be more fearful of doing evil than fire.

Since evil results in evil, anyone who loves himself should stay away from doing evil deeds to others.

22.1 Duty to Society

Question:

What is the objective of working hard and producing wealth?

Answer:

Only those who realize that others are just like them are truly living, while others who do not realize that are considered dead. (Couplet – 214)

All the wealth gained from hard work is to help the deserving people. (Couplet – 212)

ஒத்த தறிவோன் உயிர்வாழ்வான் மற்றையான்

செத்தாருள் வைக்கப் படும். (குறள் – 214)

தாளாற்றித் தந்த பொருளெல்லாம் தக்கார்க்கு

வேளாண்மை செய்தற் பொருட்டு. (குறள் – 212)

Explanation:

It is essential for every living human being to realize that other people are just like him. If such a realization is there, then one is likely to have empathy for others' sufferings. Empathy will lead to compassion, which will lead to helping the poor, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, assisting the less fortunate, etc. Helping others who are suffering can be done in two different ways. One way is to offer help when help is requested by those who are suffering. The other way is to realize that there are people who need help and proactively provide the necessary assistance. The former would come under the category of charity, and the latter would come under the category of philanthropy. Generally, Charity is an empathetic response to an immediate crisis or need. Philanthropy is long-term and a more strategic kind of assistance. For example, helping a panhandler is charity. Whereas establishing a scholarship program for poor students is philanthropy. Invariably, both charity and philanthropy involve money. Since money is vital to provide assistance either by way of charity or philanthropy, the objective of working hard and producing wealth should be to help deserving people.

22.2 Duty to Society

Question:

Is there a way to help many people for a long time?

Answer:

The wealth of a man of superior knowledge who loves the world and wants to exercise benevolence is like a lake with fresh drinking water. (kural – 215)

ஊருணி நீர்நிறைந் தற்றே உலகவாம்

பேரறி வாளன் திரு.

(குறள் – 215)

Explanation: Valluvar proposes three models for practicing philanthropy to help needy people. The first model is the "Fresh Water Lake Model of Philanthropy." A lake with fresh drinking water provides a perennial supply of drinking water to many people for an indefinitely long time. Similarly, a man of superior knowledge will use his wealth to benefit needy people for a long time. For example, he would deposit a large sum of money in a bank and use the interest from the principal to help needy people. Under this arrangement, the principal is preserved, and the interest continues to be used for helping the needy, like a lake with drinking water that supplies water to all the people all the time. This type of philanthropy offers the maximum benefit to many people for a very long time. For example, modern philanthropic foundations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, McArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, and other such large foundations have large sums of money in the bank. The interest obtained from the principal is used to benefit those who seek assistance. Since the principal is never used, this type of foundation can help many people for a very long time.

Thirukkural and Dharma Sastras



--Maraimalai Ilakkuvanar

The list of contrasts between Manu smriti and Kural will be very long and this denotes the cultural division. P.T.Srinivasa Iyengar, an eminent historian clearly demarcates the cultural background of the north and south or Aryan and Dravidian.

"In the Vedic times two cults prevailed in India: (1) that followed by the Aryas to whom Sanskrit was the sacred tongue, the language of the Gods, who made offerings to the Gods through Agni because they believed Agni to be the mouth of the Gods, and (2) that followed by the Dasyus whom the Aryas described as anagni, the

fireless. Thus Arya was always in India a cult name, the name of a method of worship, whose main characteristic was the lighting of the sacred fire. There were two forms of the Arya fire cult— the Grihya and the Crania, the cult of one fire and the cult of three fires, the Ekagni and Tretagni, the simple domestic fire-rites still performed in the houses chiefly of the Brahmanas and the gorgeous sacrifices, chiefly conducted Rajas in ancient India up to the age of the Armageddon on the plains of Kurukshetra, and now almost extinct. The Arya rites, besides being characterized by the mediation of the Fire-God, also recited the use of Sanskrit mantras, which were promulgated by the ancient seers called Rishis; the Dasyu rites had no use for fire or for Sanskrit mantras or for a privileged class of expert priests. P.2

The Tamils were the most highly cultured of the people of India before the age of the Rishis and it is proposed here to investigate the culture which the ancient Tamils attained to in South India before the gorgeous three-fire Arya rites spread, and the associated Vedic literature was promulgated, in the valleys of the Sindhu and the Ganga. The two cultures, one based on the fire cult and the other on the fireless cult, one, the product of a religious aristocracy and the other, of social democracy, p.18

When the Brahmanas settled in Southern India and the ancient Tamil Rajas desiring to secure the benefit of the Yagas, accorded to the fire-priests a supreme position in society, the Brahmanas naturally tried to introduce their socio-religious organization into Tamil society. But a religious oligarchy and a social democracy could not very well mix with each other. Hence the Brahmanas did not succeed in arranging the people of Southern India as members of the four varnas as they did in North India.p.20

(Pre-Aryan Tamil Culture BY P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, ASIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, NEW DELHI; 1985)

The repeated propaganda, that Aryan culture and Aryan language (Sanskrit) are the most ancient treasures of India and every other culture and language was barbaric, is a malicious design of neo-Aryan activists. The research of

MaxMullar, a hasty generalization of irrelevant facts, and the ignorance of western scholars about Dravidian antiquity acted as a strong base for such deviation from the factual reality.

This neo-Aryan program is the guiding force of the Modi government to proclaim “One language, one culture, one nation” as its policy. Is there even an iota of truth in this “One language, one culture, one nation” theory?

In his book titled “TIRUKKURAL-An Abridgement of Sastras,” Dr.R.Nagaswamy has wonderfully performed a revolution (!) as per his statement in his preface to this book.”Thirukkural, by sage Thiruvalluvar, is studied from a new revolutionary angle, citing extensively, from Sanskrit Dharmasastras, Artha sastra, Natya sastra and Kama sutra as a derivative book of Hindu Vedic tradition.”(p.6)

This sweeping statement of Dr.Nagaswamy clearly reveals, he had not studied any of the above mentioned books, as extensive and elaborate reading of these books will make one understand that Thirukkural is quite different from the Sanskrit books.

A renowned philosopher, Dr. Albert Schweitzer had studied all the sastras, Brahmanas, smritis, Upanishads, and Vedas as an ardent reader with a dedicated spirit to learn Indian philosophy. In his book titled” Indian Thought and its development”, he gives a clear picture of the difference between Thirukkural and Sanskrit sastras.

“In the famous ancient Book of the Laws of Manu (Manu-Smrti), we find Brahmanic worldview applied to ordinary life. Manu is the divine Primeval Father of the human race. The Brahmin-divinity is said to have revealed to him the laws valid for individuals and for society, and his son Bhrgu communicated them to human beings.

Manu’s Law Book originated somewhere between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. But it certainly contains matter that belongs to a much earlier period. The six first sections of the work treat the creation of the world and the order of Brahmins, the seventh of the king and his duties, the eighth and ninth of the laws, the tenth of castes and semi-castes, the eleventh of acts of atonement, the twelfth of reincarnation and redemption.

“(Indian Thought and its development by Albert Schweitzer Chapter XI Brahmanic World-view in the laws of Manu p.166)

Dr.Schweitzer elucidates the essence of Manava dharma sastra in apt words appropriately. “According to this book, the Brahmins are appointed by the Brahman-divinity lords over all that the world contains. They are to be venerated as god-like beings. A Brahmin at ten years old must be as much respected as if he were the father of a hundred-year-old member of the warrior class. And even if a Brahmin has committed every kind of crime, he may not be condemned to death, but only to banishment. The worst sin that a man can load upon himself is the murder of a Brahmin. He must

expiate it with death and will be born again as a savage beast. Anyone who seizes a Brahmin by the hair is to have his hands cut off; anyone who steals a cow from a Brahmin shall have one foot mutilated. If a man dies without leaving natural heirs, his property shall go to the Brahmins. If a Brahmin finds buried treasure, it belongs to him in its entirety; if the King finds such, he must share it with the Brahmins. By his deferential behavior to a Brahmin, a member of a lower caste can attain to reincarnation in a higher.”

Dr.Schweitzer reveals the fact that Manava dharma sastra acts as a constitution for a government of the Brahmins, by the Brahmins and for the Brahmins.”

While Manu dharma upholds the distention of man by his caste and discriminates against men by their birth Thirukkural wishes to unite humankind and propagates social justice. The unique nature of Thirukkural which is a guide for equality and fraternity is well explained by Professor S.Ilakkuvanar.

“The distinction between man and man is based mainly on the difference of religion or color or nation. But there are no natural or physiological differences and distinctions. The distinction of color is the result of different climate conditions. Such distinctions as these are negations of the fundamental underlying unity between man and man. Kural code bases its principles on this unity and the entire human race for the common good, benefit, and welfare. It teaches universal brotherhood, the brotherhood of man, and the fatherhood of God.

Kural code is not confined to any country, race, or religion. It is based on the principle of world citizenship and world state. Any man is a citizen of the world and belongs to the world and

the world belongs to him. It offers solutions to the individual as well as to world problems, solutions to the political, social, economic problems from which the world is suffering. Its outlook is the broadest. Kural is far above the religious level. The Book of each religion is intended for those who owe allegiance to it; it extols that religion at the cost of others. Kural does not suffer from such limitation of religion; it teaches ethical life for the entire mankind. The value of Kural Neri is incomparably supreme, unequaled, and unparalleled. Kural code is the message of the Tamilian race conveying the principle of universal brotherhood to the rest of the world, containing the essence of Tamilian culture. It conveys a message of love to the world.”(Dr.S.Ilakkuvanar, KuralNeri: English Fortnightly-15/02/1966)

Dharmasastras aim at safeguarding the power at the hands of Brahmins and dictate all others to be the obedient slaves of the Brahmins. Thirukkural guides us to shatter the man-made differences and unite to usher in an egalitarian society.

The chapter on “Avoidance of drinking liquor” in Thirukkural (93) by Valluvar does not only aim to advise people of all walks but also chastises the Aryan custom of drinking Soma wine.

The Soma beverage was prepared with much ceremony from the juice of a plant. " We drank Soma, we became immortal, we found the gods ", so runs a hymn of the Rig- Veda about Soma-drinking.(Indian thought and its development By Albert Schweitzer. II. The Rise of World and Life Negation in Indian Thought. p22)

Rig Veda ADHYA' YA VII. ANUVA'KA II.. sam I II. (XIX) can be cited here.

1 . Come back: go not elsewhere: abounding in wealth, sprinkle us; AGNI and SOMA, you who Clothe (your worshippers) again, bestow upon us riches.

While the Rig Veda celebrates the drinking of Soma liquor, Thiruvalluvar condemns the drinking habit vehemently:

“924. The goodly maid called ‘Modesty’ would turn her back on those Who drinks, which is a mighty, despised sin of endless woes.

926. The men asleep are not different from those who are quite dead.The men who quaff the liquor are but those with poison fed.

930. While in his sober state, if he could see a drunkard's face Won't he remember all the ills of his own drunken state?”

These couplets of Kural clearly reveal the demarcation between the *Vedic marg* celebrated by Nagaswamy and the way of life Kural preaches for more civilized life.While Vedic dharma preaches that drinking Soma liquor will bring bliss and wealth Thirukkural warns drinking will bring disgrace and shame to mankind. Dr.Nagaswamy shamelessly tells a blatant lie that “Valluvar is the first and foremost to bring down the Vedic dharma system to the Tamils with absolute authority.”(p.12)

The difference between Dharmasastras and Thirukkural is the difference between a religious oligarchy that suppressed a majority of the people in the name of Dharma and social democracy which acted as a base for the wonderful Thirukkural.

Dharma is law and Aram is in other words social justice. Dharma is sectarian and Aram is cosmopolitan and universal. Dharma divides people; Aram unifies them. Dharma threatens a majority to obey unjustified rules imposed b a minority for the benefit of a minority. Aram appeals to everybody to lead a peaceful co-existent life.

Thirukkural teaches Aram to be followed by everyone to mold and shape an egalitarian society. Dharmasastras mercilessly imposed cruel orders to be obeyed without any question to maintain the hegemony of Brahmin domination. In this age of awareness among the downtrodden to fight for their rights Dharmas are dying a natural death. Aram will flourish to usher in a golden age of liberty, equality, and fraternity.





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Our guiding star and enlightening Mentor for ever

The centenary celebrations for Prof.K.Anbazagan, endearingly called as Perasiriyar by millions and millions of Tamils, have begun.

We are sure his memory will surely be cherished for many centuries.

In the history of Tamilnadu, he will be remembered as a sagacious statesman and ever-active politician during his long political career.

He adorned the faculty of the luminous institution, Pachaiyappa's college, as a Tamil Professor for some time and switched over to active political life under the leadership of Anna.

A staunch adherent of Periyar's ideology, a sincere follower of Anna and a close friend of Kalaignar, he never hesitated to face humiliations and incarcerations imposed by the ruling party whenever D.M.K. functioned as an opposition party.



He courted arrest many times in the protests against the imposition of Hindi. His lectures made the political platforms as open universities educating the people about the antiquity of Tamil civilization, the magnificence of Sangam classics which portrayed the early Tamils' cultural uniqueness and the importance of following the maxims preached by Thiruvalluvar.

As an astounding orator, prolific writer, tireless journalist, pragmatic administrator, exemplary legislator leading parliamentarian he outshined and acted as a model for the younger generation.





This multifaceted genius had only one aim i.e. to serve the people. He mingled with the masses and never thought to take an ivory tower position.

He will be our guiding star and enlightening Mentor forever. The younger generation who have entered politics should emulate him to serve the land and people for a better future,

Thirukkural:Questions and answers

-Thirukkuralaar Dr. R. Prabhakaran



22.3 Social Obligation

(22.3 ஒப்புரவறிதல்)

Question:

Is there an example for helping a community for a specific period?

Answer:

The wealth of a very benevolent philanthropist is like a fruit tree
in the middle of a town. (Couplet – 216)

பயன்மரம் உள்ளூர்ப் பழுத்தற்றால் செல்வம்
நயனுடை யான்கண் படிந்.

(குறள் – 216)

Explanation:

A fruit tree supplies fruits to a reasonably large number of people in a community for a specific period. When the fruit season is over, those who need the fruit from the tree will have to wait till the following season. Practitioners of this type of philanthropy provide help when there is money and when there is no money, they wait until more funds are available. Examples of this type of philanthropy would include modern philanthropic organizations like the United Way, Red Cross, and other organizations which depend upon donations from the donors and provide benefits if funds are available and wait until more funds are available to render additional assistance. This type of philanthropy can be called the "Fruit Tree model of Philanthropy."

22.4 Social Obligation

(22.4 ஒப்புரவறிதல்)

Question:

Is there an example for offering valuable help at the expense of giving away everything?

Answer:

The wealth of a philanthropist who is a genuinely magnanimous person is like a medicinal tree. (Couplet – 217)

மருந்தாகித் தப்பா மரத்தற்றால் செல்வம்

பெருந்தகை யான்கண் படின. (குறள் – 217)

Explanation:

If a medicinal tree in which every part of the tree, including its roots, bark, flowers, fruits, seeds, and leaves, are all useful for medicinal purposes, people would harvest all parts of the tree, and the tree would no longer exist. Similarly, the truly magnanimous philanthropist would distribute all his wealth until there is nothing left to give. This type of philanthropy is like the "Spend Down Foundations" in the USA. In a Spend Down Foundation, all the assets are spent for the intended purposes, and once the assets are depleted, there is nothing more to give. This type of philanthropy can be called the "Medicinal Tree Model of Philanthropy."

23.1 Charity

(23.1 ஈகை)

Question:

What is charity?

Answer:

To give to the needy alone is charity. All the rest is an investment in anticipation of a return. (Couplet – 221)

Even if it is good to receive charity from others for livelihood, it is still wrong. Even if heaven is denied to the giver, giving (charity) is still good. (Couplet – 222)

வறியார்க்குஒன்று ஈவதே ஈகைமற் றெல்லாம்

குறியெதிர்ப்பை நீர துடைத்து. (குறள் – 221)

நல்லாறு எனினும் கொளல்தீது மேலுலகம்

இல்லெனினும் ஈதலே நன்று. (குறள் – 222)

Explanation:

Merriam – Webster dictionary defines charity as giving money, food, or other kinds of help to people who are poor, sick, etc. Also, charity is a natural, emotional impulse to an immediate situation, and it usually occurs when someone asks for help. Furthermore, charity is helping someone who is in need without expecting anything in return from him. All other forms of giving imply that the receiver will give something in return. Eastern religions like Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism maintain that the right thing for a true ascetic is to beg for his food. Even if it is considered proper for an ascetic to beg, Valluvar claims it is still wrong (Couplet – 222). He believes that begging for food is not an acceptable way of life.

Most religions maintain that those who perform charitable acts will be rewarded in heaven. But such a reward is not guaranteed. Valluvar says it is better to practice charity even if there is no heaven (Couplet – 222).